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A Framework for the Consideration of Narrative in Creative Arts Practice

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A Framework for the Consideration of Narrative in Creative Arts Practice

by

Paul Green

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth in partial
fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Art, Design and Architecture

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ABSTRACT

This research project is aimed at creative practitioners in art and design who choose to engage in postgraduate research and who recognise narrative to be an important aspect of their work. While the goal of narratology has been explicitly declared as an interest in understanding narrative in all its forms, this project responded to a perceived absence of art and design centred perspectives in the general literature on narrative.

A general attitude has developed throughout the course of the twentieth century resulting in a view that narrative has become a dead issue for contemporary practitioners. Findings from the investigations conducted as part of this project demonstrate a contrary view and show that definitions of narrative tend to be weak unless anchored in specific practices or disciplines. The lack of scholarship to support contemporary art and design research practitioners produces a problem by giving the false impression that narrative is largely irrelevant to practice. It also inhibits new scholarship when what currently exists is poorly categorised. The research question asks how it is possible to support the creative practitioner doing postgraduate research to better articulate their position on narrative in a way that contributes to scholarship in the arts and consequently to knowledge about narrative in general.

The thesis argues that approaches to narrative traditionally associated with the discussion of art continue to be relevant today but only account for practice in a marginalised way. It posits that theorisation of narrative in the social sciences provides additional opportunities for creative arts practitioners. In psychology, sociology and anthropology the focus has tended towards localised or personal narrative in accordance with the disciplinary interests in those fields. If small stories, in contrast to the great narratives of history or literary art, can be regarded as the prototype of narrative, then artists can draw on other academic resources which better reflect their own disciplinary interests.

Having established narrative to be more relevant than it might otherwise appear in the existing traditional scholarship, the thesis proceeds to make use of my practice as a case demonstrating narrative possibilities to be considered in relation to the work of practicing artists. Since my work operates across fields of art and design it was necessary to use a mix of methods to reveal the understanding of narrative in the different cases. Finally, the thesis proposes a narrative framework which categorises narrative in creative practice in five classes which incorporate the work, its reception, and the social space in which it is experienced. In addition, the practitioner's perspective is a distinct class. The purpose of the framework is not to describe narrative in all the forms that could ever be imagined by creative practitioners. Instead it offers a way of thinking about narrative that is derived from practice and structured relative to theories traditionally used to discuss narrative and art.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was often presented; external institutions were visited for consultation purposes and several papers prepared for publication.

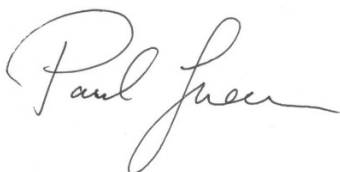
Presentations and conferences attended:

- International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling (ICIDS) 2008, Erfurt, Germany (Delegate)
- International Symposium on Electronic Arts (ISEA) 2009 Belfast, N. Ireland (Delegate)
- Artistic Research: Evaluation and Canon Formation 2010, Zurich University of the Arts, Zurich, Switzerland. (Delegate)
- Scale AFM Workshop 2010, Plymouth, UK. (participate in workshop with Atomic Force Microscope, led by Mike Phillips and Dr. Chris Speed)
- iHCI 2010, DCU, Dublin, ACM Paper (Paper Presentation)
- Boundary Work I 2010, Wandesford Quay Gallery, Cork (Curated and Exhibited)
- Collaborative European Research Conference 2011 (Review Panel), Blackrock Castle Observatory, Cork, Ireland.
- Create 2011, Shoreditch House, London, UK (Program Committee and Delegate)

- iHCI 2011 (Organiser and Program Chair), CIT & Nimbus Research Centre, Cork, Ireland.
- Rethinking Technology in Museums 2011, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland. (Program Committee)
- Interaction 12, Dublin, Ireland (Delegate)
- Collaborative European Research Conference 2012, University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt, Germany (Review Panel & Paper Presentation, 'Cognitive Prototypes and Narrative Thinking')
- Difference Engine 2012, Group Exhibition, Skibereen Arts Centre, West Cork, Ireland. (Exhibition of data driven video work entitled 'Pulse', and interactive sculpture entitled 'Probe' – 'Pulse was produce in collaboration with BCOLabs and Cian Roche, 'Probe' was produced in collaboration with Mark Cullen)
- Boundary Work II 2012, Wandesford Quay Gallery, Cork, Ireland (Facilitator and Organizer)
- Collaborative European Research Conference 2013 (Review Panel, Chair of Media Session, and two co-authored paper presentations, 'Facilitating the "distributed museum" through digital augmented artefacts' presented by Martin McCarthy; 'Designing for Play' presented by Denise Heffernan).
- Revisiting Practice | Research 2013, GradCAM, Dublin. (Presented position paper on practice-based research)
- Tweak Festival 2009, Limerick, Ireland (attended workshop in Open Frameworks with Arturo Castro and Pierre Proske)
- International Conference on Narrative 2013, Manchester Metropolitan University Manchester, UK.
- Digital Heritage 2013, Marseille, France (Delegate)
- Narrative in Practice, London, UK. 2013 (Delegate)
- National Gallery of Ireland, Research Day, 2015 (Paper presentation, 'Negotiating Principles for Exhibition Design')
- Qualitative Data Analysis with Nvivo 2015, CIT, Cork Ireland (participated in two-day workshop led by Ben Meehan of QDA Training)

- Collaborative European Research Conference 2016 (Review Panel, Panel Chair, and three co-authored paper presentations, "Designing narrative artefacts - the lives of women in eighteenth century Cork" presented by Jenny Dempsey; 'Playing in the museum: shaping a definition of digitally mediated playful experiences' presented by Denise Heffernan; 'Exploring new collaborative approaches in engagement and education towards the creation and enhancement of future STEM careers' presented by Dr. Kieran Delaney).

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Overview

This study aims to provide a structured way of thinking about narrative which supports the development of academic knowledge through creative practice. How is it possible to discuss narrative in relation to the image shown in Figure 1.1 below? The information in the image shows no evidence of any action or events that could be described as *causal* or *connected* in the way that often appear in definitions of narrative. Something might be said about the word *myth* in the title being a hint towards storytelling or that #9 holds some significance by suggesting

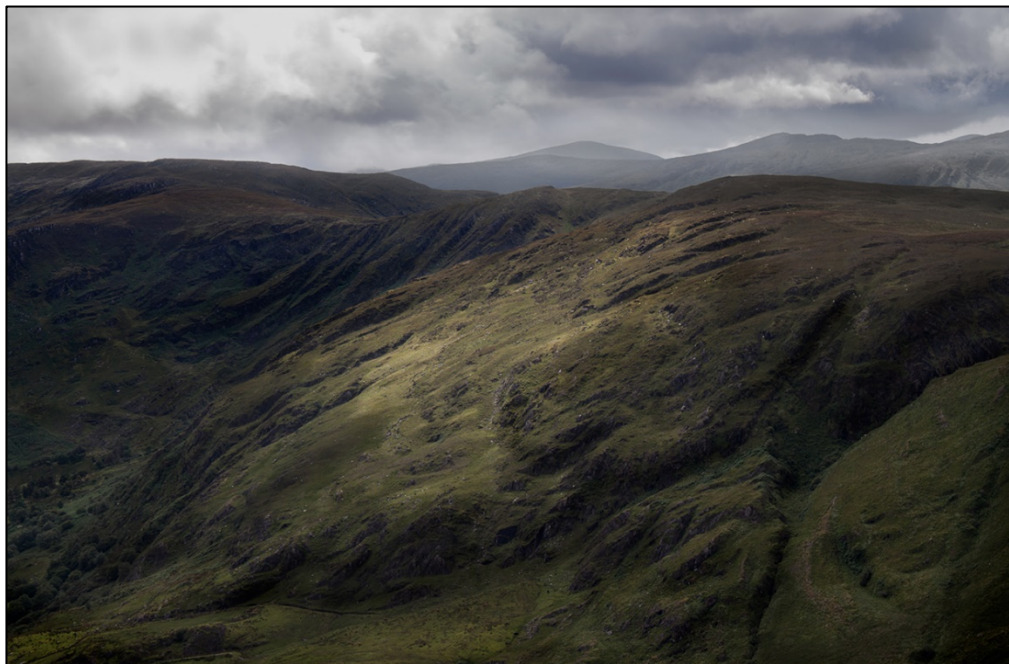


Figure 1.1 *Myth #9 Maoileann* (Green, 2016) See Appendix 1 section A1.1 for a description of the context of this work. This piece appears as Figure A1.1.9 *Myth #9 Maoileann* in the appendix.

the image is ninth in a series. The events that contribute to its story might then be available elsewhere in the images that are not shown. As a spectator the narrative

can be brought to the surface only if I am willing to do the work of filling in these gaps using my imagination. It is possible also to suggest that the site represented in the picture, called *Maoileann*, has some special importance for those who know it or have access to its history. And again, if the viewer is willing to imagine, they might guess at that history. While there is literature to support this way of thinking about still images as narrative media the criteria supporting it is far from universally agreed. While certain media, such as photography or painting, have some tradition of being discussed in narrative terms, it is much less clear how other contemporary forms of expression, such as the interactive work shown in in Figure 1.2, might invoke narrative or support a narrative experience.

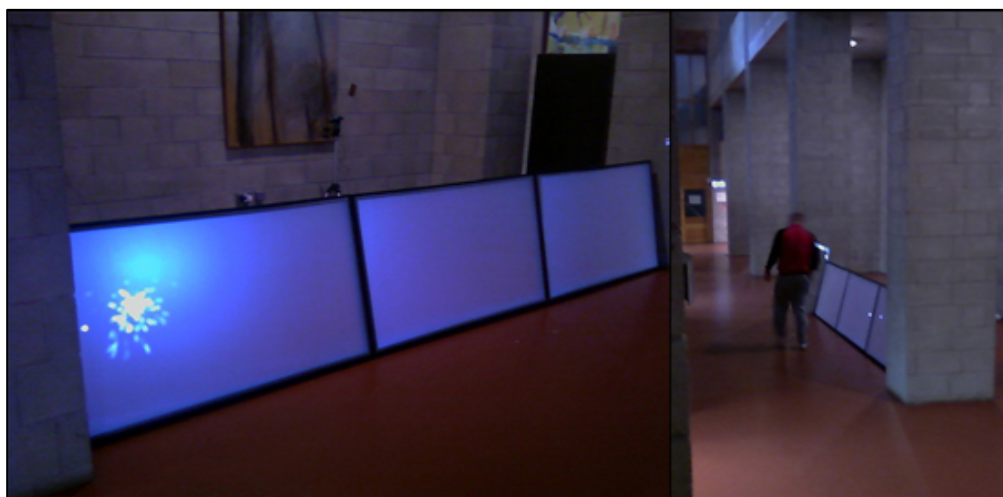


Figure 1.2 *Trails* (Green, 2012) See Appendix 1 section A1.7 for a description of the context of this work.

As a creative practitioner the absence of appropriate discourse reflecting my understanding of narrative in practice has provoked the research described in this thesis. In linking creative practice with narrative the intention is to provide a perspective on narrative that will be of some value to arts practitioners engaged in research. This is a position which is distinct from other approaches traditionally taken to narrative in visual art which have been inclined to focus on artistic output

as the target for narrative analysis. Here the emphasis encompasses artistic output (artefacts), the social environment in which the work is presented, and the way in which narrative can be seen to operate in and through the creative process. As such, the study is necessarily broad in that it borrows from approaches to narrative across a range of disciplines. It required treading into territory in the humanities which has not traditionally been read as relevant to discourse on art. By doing so the study intended to give shape to the discussion of narrative in contemporary artistic practice by providing a framework for the development of a more precise discourse on narrative in creative practice.

1.2 The problem

The problem in speaking about narrative in creative arts practice is one which essentially comes down to context. In this regard a central observation relates to the perceived absence of creative practitioner-centred perspectives on narrative in the general literature on narrative. For the purpose of this study it is not identified as a problem for creative practitioners *per se* but for creative practitioners operating within an academic context who claim narrative to be part of their practice and therefore part of a scholarship they support and participate in. How and where they account for their understanding of narrative is not well supported in the existing literature refers to narrative in art practice. If there is any shared understanding of what narrative means for creative practitioners, or how it might be significant for them, then currently it is not well understood.

The term narratology has been used to capture the study of narrative in its widest sense¹. Narratology can be regarded today not as a theory of narrative but as a discipline that encapsulates a range of theories across disciplines that study narrative for reasons that relate to their own scholarship. Narratology since its inception in the nineteen sixties has been transformed from a science of narrative to now an umbrella term intent on capturing the study of narrative in all its forms. The grounds for regarding narratology as a discipline, as opposed to a theory, are supported primarily by the fact that narratology is now institutionalised across a network which comprises the North American based International Society for the Study of Narrative (ISSN), the European Narratology Network (ENN), and the Nordic Network². As would be expected the organisation of activities of the membership of these associations overlap³. The academic study of narrative is therefore anchored through this network in university departments running courses

¹ Jan Meister provides a detailed definition of narratology. See MEISTER, J. C. 2011 (2014). Narratology. In: HÜHN, P. E. A. E. (ed.) *The living handbook of narratology*. Hamburg: The Interdisciplinary Center for Narratology (Hamburg University). Available from: <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/narratology> [Access date: 26 Mar 2015]. Meister provides a concise outline of the various fields that emerged between the inception of the study to the present day. Tzvetan Todorov is widely recognised as first to coin the term narratologie in *Grammaire du Décaméron* (1969) although Meister attributes the popular uptake of narratologie to Mike Bal in *Narratologie* (1977) rather than Todorov. Narratology was the term given to the field of narrative study initially concerned with uncovering the deep structure of narrative under the surface of all instances of story. As such its methods were scientific and it sat outside the narrow confines of any specific discipline.

² Ibid

³ The authors named in the *The living handbook of narratology* (LHN), which is a key online publication associated with the ENN, include Jan Albers and Brian McHale who have both served executive roles for the ISSN. At the time of writing Jan Albers is the President of the ISSN and affiliated with RWTH Aachen University in Germany.

in narrative across various media and disciplinary interests⁴. It is obvious then to look at the activities of this network as a place for the expression of different disciplinary approaches to narrative including those by creative practitioners. However, a cursory review of the presentations at the International Conference on Narrative goes some way in demonstrating the absence of artist-centred perspectives.

The International Conference on Narrative is organised by the ISSN which describes itself as a “non-profit association of scholars dedicated to the investigation of narrative.” On page 3 of the 2013 conference program narrative is presented as a category which includes: “the novel, epic poetry, history, biography, autobiography, film, the graphic arts, music, performance, legal writing, medical case histories, and more.” The annual conference, true to the legacy in narratology, clearly incorporates a cross-disciplinary program despite being organised by literary departments in the hosting institutions each year. In 2013 the event was hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University where three hundred and sixty-one papers were presented across a range of disciplines which included film, games, dance, visual art and architecture. There were one hundred and eight discreet sessions over three days. Eight of these had titles that categorised them in terms of film narrative, graphic narrative, reading pictures, dance and narrative, gaming,

⁴ Jan-Noël Thon recently compiled a list of institutions offering courses in narrative. The list was shared on the ISSN mailing list on 11th August 2017 and of the 39 courses mentioned 7 explicitly used the term Transmedia or Transmediale in the title. Two other courses used the phrases 'Narrative Across Media' and 'Narration Across Media' in their titles. Other courses on the list had implicit references to the study of narrative in various media. For example: University of Malta, Malta (Remediating Narrative) or The University of Texas at Austin, US (Narrative Strategies and Media Design).

and digital processes. However, when one examines the individual presentations only three are explicitly cited as research work being conducted in university art departments. While the ethos expressed by the ISSN's appears inclusive of narrative formulations extended by various disciplines there is no mistaking the significant discrepancy evident in the contribution of arts practitioners. Until recently⁵ a similar deficit of practicing artists is evidenced in other conferences that focus on narrative such as the International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling (ICIDS).

From a professional position the absence of artists from contemporary narrative discourses instinctively seems odd, as so much of my work as a practitioner has emanated from a perspective that largely relies on narrative as a guiding principle. By this I mean, that while narrative can often be recognised in finished pieces of work, it is also present in the process I use to make sense of the work as it develops. Through experience of working with other artists and designers I had the distinct impression that narrative is always there in some form or another as a way of making sense of, or structuring, the development of the work. The initial motivation for the research therefore partly originated in a feeling that narrative can be understood as something that underlines the creative process. That is, in

⁵ At the time of writing the ICIDS call for submissions includes request for artworks for exhibition and opens the possibility for more dialogue with practitioners familiar with that particular mode of research presentation. It should be also noted that there is limited interaction between the ICIDS and the activities of the narratology networked mentioned above.

addition to the possibility of artists' works being labelled *narrative works* it may also be part of their cognitive process or methodology.

The disparity between my experience of narrative and the apparent absence of a cohesive academic discourse specifically relevant to contemporary, or even recent, artistic practices was problematic from an academic research perspective. If practice-based researchers hold narrative to be an important feature of their work, they are presented with an immediate difficulty in conducting research as supporting scholarship is unavailable as a set of cohesive theories. This constitutes an academic problem which can be looked at from two positions. The first is to do with narratology being blind to narrative perspectives in the study of the creative arts which due to their absence weakens narratology's overall objective of understanding narrative in all its forms. The second is that creative practitioners interested in narrative as part of their academic pursuit are poorly supported by existing scholarship which largely fails in assisting them to contribute to knowledge of narrative within their own field.

1.3 The research questions

The central research question follows on from asking whether narrative is valued in contemporary art practice? If so, where is it evident? Presuming it does exist, then how can the discourse on narrative in contemporary art be identified and described? The first question above raises the issue of whether or not narrative is relevant to contemporary practice at all. While I have an interest in it from the perspective of my practice this is not confirmation of any wider field of interest. Since this project aims to contribute to the scholarship in art and design, and

explicitly focussing on creative practitioners doing research, it is necessary to establish if an academic interest in narrative exists in the field already. If an interest can be established, then the second question seeks to identify where that interest is expressed. If not captured in the scholarship of the narratological network mentioned above – which presents itself as the study of narrative in all its forms - then where is it to be found? Finally, if a wider discourse in contemporary art and narrative does exist, then how is it to be identified and described. These are questions that point directly at research activities conducted as part of the PhD from which the central question is derived.

The answers to these questions had to be cast in relation to my practice, but more specifically my *practice as research*. As a practising artist it is questionable if I have any need to explain my work. However, within the context of a formal educational institution supporting postgraduate research there is an obligation to defend the research. This is invariably achieved through language in presentations given in writing for conferences, orally in seminars, or through established examination procedures such as the *viva voce*. Therefore, when I articulate how narrative is relevant to my practice how might this be regarded as holding a legitimate interest for the field. The central research question is heavily dependent on a positive response to the first question above. The other two questions then provide a basis on which to build a better framework for how narrative might serve the practice-based researcher academically. The overall research question can then be condensed as follows:

How is it possible to support the creative arts practitioner doing postgraduate research in articulating their position on narrative, relevant to their practice, in a way that is congruent with scholarship in art and contributes to a general academic scholarship on narrative.

In addressing this question, it was necessary to investigate the academic discourse on art which overlaps with narrative to discover what already exists in the literature and, in addition, how this could be characterised. That is, could some patterns be identified in terms of how narrative is already tied to the specific disciplinary fields of artistic practice. Outside of the established literature it was also necessary to gather data from creative practitioners to get a sense of their attitude to, or awareness of, narrative in their work. Secondly, if the literature on narrative in contemporary art practice is inadequate then knowing something about how narrative gets used more generally in relation to creative practice outside academia might help expose what is not covered in formal academic scholarship.

1.4 Academic context and contribution

In addition to the activities mentioned above there is also the important role of the practice. This is by no means secondary to the investigation of narrative in the academic discourse on art. Part of the contribution to knowledge proposed by the study is gleaned through my experience of narrative in practice, therefore consideration of the work, or the act of making it, would need to be interrogated. While my academic background is in Fine Art I have worked in design for interactive media since 1995. I have also taught and supervised Interactive Media projects since 2002 and recognised narrative to be an aspect of creative thinking

that was not well registered in academic literature. The contribution to knowledge should be of value to the wider creative arts community. That community is defined here as those educated in schools of art, design, and media who engage in postgraduate research and whose academic interest in narrative requires a cohesive set of concepts to help structure what it is they say about narrative as a feature of their work. The research project described in this thesis therefore should be seen most directly as proposing a narrative framework aimed at serving the objective of extending the grounds for the consideration of narrative in creative practice.

For me the ideas that are expressed in this thesis can be translated between art and design practice, but this should not be interpreted as a confusion of art practice with design practice. To refer to them as disciplines they can be recognised as traditionally having a common interest in aesthetics and a shared knowledge of art and design history. Often the lines are not so clear. Designers can be influenced by artists and vice versa. They are distinct of course in the sense that artists are often associated with methods regarded as free or self-expressive whereas designers are traditionally more focussed on delivering functional solutions for clients with whom they are commercially tied through contracts. However successful artists are often required to deliver on public commissions while designers may operate on long term projects that speculate about future products or architectures. The use of the term *creative practice*, or *creative practitioners*, or *art and design practice* should be interpreted as recognition of the common ground between the disciplines where the ideas about narrative can be shared, and not a conflation of them as the same thing. Discussing art and design issues in the one forum is not unusual which

will become apparent as the thesis progresses. Having said that my primary and master's degrees were in fine art, so the thinking and examples of work given in will be largely set in that orientation. Work will typically imply work of art, unless otherwise specified.

Before any framework was considered there were some important issues about the function of the research regarding which mode it would operate in, and more importantly who it was for. This required some consideration of practice based research itself. The project was imagined as building a support for academic knowledge within art and design research, as distinct from art practice generally. In doing so it recognised the ongoing debate about the nature of artistic research. While research in the arts is an established educational path in third level institutions, it still remains in its infancy comparative to research in science-based disciplines⁶. The relatively short history of practice-based research in art and design, comparative to other disciplines, produces alternative philosophical positions which seek to define what art-based research should be⁷. These positions

⁶ James Elkins has expressed frustration in recent years in the absence of any comprehensive study published on which art education institutions provide Doctoral programmes in the arts; not to mention what the guiding criteria might be for existing programmes ELKINS, J. 2013. Some Salient Issues. *Artists with PhDs* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.jameselkins.com/yy/> [Accessed Spring 2013 2013]..

⁷ The problems and possibilities associated with level 10 art-based research are discussed by Christopher Frayling in an early paper. See FRAYLING, C. 1993. Research in Art and Design. *Royal College of Art Research Papers*, 1. Earlier in 1989 Shaun McNiff outlines the value of art -based research in its own right as well as for enquiry in other disciplines such as psychology. See MCNIFF, S. 2008. Art-Based Research. In: KNOWLES, J. G. & COLE, A. L. (eds.) *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research : perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. McNiff gives credit to the work of Rudolf Arnheim and Susanne Langer in the 1950s and 1960s as providing a cognitive and psychological basis for art-based research. The current view of practice-based artistic research however emerges largely in the 1990s and gained popularity through the turn of the century. Authors such as Caroline Gray and later

understandably relate to how art practice corresponds to an existing well-established model of research in academic institutions. Sometimes research in art has been regarded as a completely new paradigm that requires alternative criteria to account for the kind of knowledge that results from art practice. In an early article on the subject Clive Cazeaux suggests:

The greater part of that history gives us arguments which try to wedge conceptual judgement and aesthetic experience apart. I am thinking here primarily of the epistemologies of Plato and Descartes, both of which argue to the effect that rational knowledge is of a wholly distinct order from sensory experience. (Cazeaux, 2002)

While Cazeaux uses the apparent dichotomy between reason and sensation, to challenge the distinction between conceptual and aesthetic knowledge, Brad Haseman appeals for the recognition of art practice as an entirely new paradigm for research. His view being that artistic research stands outside of the traditions established in quantitative and qualitative approaches in science and the humanities. Building on an early definition of practice-led research by Carol Gray (Gray and Malins, 2004) he takes the view that:

Practice-led researchers are formulating a third species of research, one that stands in alignment with, but separate to, the established quantitative and qualitative research traditions. (Haseman, 2010, p.150)

Michael Biggs and Henk Borgdorff contribute to the growing discourse which sought to shape a position for research in art and design relative to traditional research practices in other disciplines.

In another way, Henk Borgdorff noting the distinction between artistic practice 'in itself' and art practice 'as research' takes the view that:

neither the natural science model, the humanities model nor the social science model can serve as a benchmark for artistic research (Borgdorff, 2010, p.45)

Definitions of research that carry weight within educational settings or funding frameworks are those established by organisations that consider a wider societal and economic context for research. The position illustrated by Michael Biggs and Daniela Martins Büchler (Büchler, 2008) on art and design research is more conservative in its orientation towards established research paradigms reinforced by organisations such as the OECD. In describing a 'criterion-based approach' (pp.88-90) to research they appear to take a contrary view, to those such as Haseman and Borgdorff, that practice-based research should not be seen as entirely different from established models. Their *Situated Position* (Büchler and Biggs, 2008a), which places art and design research on the same academic footing as science and engineering research, is opposed to what they call the *Isolationist Position*, apparently supported by Haseman and Borgdorff. While the purpose of established research fields in the sciences may be taken for granted, debates about the value, identity, or purpose of arts-based research are poised to continue for some time⁸.

⁸ See ROBERTS, S. 2015. For (and Against) Biggs and Büchler. . *The Dark Precursor: International Conference on Deleuze and Artistic Research, 9th - 11th November 2015*. Ghent, Belgium.

Therefore, it is important to say that the research presented in this thesis is focussed on contributing to knowledge about attitudes to narrative as they are seen to be available in the language and practice of art. Its function is to offer a perspective on understanding how narrative can be relevant for creative practitioners, and therefore valuable to them. In this way the research looks for how narrative is characterised in the discourse on art but also appeals for other perspectives to better account for contemporary practices. The contribution can be regarded as a filter for contextualising what it is we mean when we use the term narrative in relation to artistic practice. While narrative in everyday use may be understood intuitively, its meaning from one academic discipline to another cannot be assumed. Martin Kreiswirth, having explored the explosion of interest in narrative across practically every discipline within the humanities, asked: when we talk about ‘discursive formations labelled narratives’ in diverse fields are we really talking about ‘the same sorts of things?’ (Kreiswirth, 2000, p. 294).

The same question can be asked in relation to creative arts practice. Are the things we intuitively refer to as narratives in art compatible with the kind of practices that have now evolved in contemporary art and design? Does the term narrative as it is used in the discussion of nineteenth century romantic painting have any relationship with narrative as it might be used by a contemporary artist using interactive media? The concern from the outset of this research was that these are, as Kreiswirth suggested in relation to disciplines in the humanities, in fact different things. The problem then for creative practitioners is to do with how and where

they can grasp the particular family of narrative theories that assist in them articulating the specific narrative application they discover in their work.

For me then, the declaration of the research as practice-based, or practice-led, is important since the ideas about narrative derived from the research are partially informed from an ‘inside view’ of the practice. While a critic, art theorist, or historian can develop a theory of narrative based on their experience of my work they do not inhabit the process that brings that work to life. While it remains necessary to take an external objective view in establishing the research question and positioning it relative to the field, an equally significant part of the study required adopting an inside view from a practitioners perspective. The narrative framework developed through this research project is derived from those two points of view. One involved a review of narrative already available in the discourse related to creative practice, or what practitioners say about it, with the objective of establishing patterns in its use relevant to contemporary art. The second involves a reflection on my practice which serves the purpose of structuring a meaningful framework which gives academic credibility to what I say about narrative in my work. Since my professional practice migrates between making art, teaching design, and researching exhibition design, it provides a wide gamut of opportunities for how narrative enters my thinking. The practice offers a suitable range of case studies aimed at building a more robust academic language for creative practitioners defending their research.

With this in mind the project can be positioned on the one hand as traditional in that it subscribes to the kind of position taken up by Büchler and Biggs and in line

with methods commonly found in the sciences. Research *into* art and design was the phrase used by Christopher Frayling (1993, p.5) to describe the most 'straightforward' and 'by far the most common' category of research in art and design. It produces knowledge by examining art as data in historical research, aesthetic or perceptual research, or research into a variety of theoretical perspectives (ibid). This is a valid category here. On the other hand it seeks to generate knowledge by researching *through* art and design practice where the action of developing and testing work sharpens narrative concepts that are prevalent during the process; that is, in the thinking of the artist and not just in the work that is residual to that process.

1.5 The narrative framework for practice

In accounting for my practice, the theoretical basis for the work is drawn from different disciplines. The narrative framework emerged as a way of putting structure on the complex of narrative principles that can come into play in the practice of art and design. It is the central outcome of the research derived from observations on my own practice coupled with what emerged from the review of narrative in academic scholarship, the wider literature on art and design, and a survey of attitudes practitioners have to narrative in their work.

Like many practitioners my work operates across a range of modalities rather than being anchored in any one medium. The examples given in Figure 1.1 and 1.2 above indicate that while photography has been a prominent medium I am also interested in integrating digitally automated processes in the design of works. Therefore, the work and the thinking that informs it, cannot be sufficiently

supported by any single narrative theory. Some visual works I have produced may have features, such as a pregnant moment, comparable to what one might expect to find discussed in relation to pictorial narrative in painting⁹. These works can be interrogated by adapting interpretative methods utilised by art historians for analysing pictorial narratives¹⁰. Such techniques however would be inappropriate for analysing non-representational or non-figurative sculptural works with which the gallery visitor could interact and change. The point is that if a practitioner understands narrative to be present in their practice, and that practice is not comparable to artworks conventionally associated with narrative analysis, then what rationale can a practitioner use to account for their instinct that narrative is present. When one examines how narrative is applied by practitioners in discussing their work, the usage is largely colloquial. The purpose of the framework is to help forge some possibilities for how narrative can be reconsidered to formally account for that artistic instinct, and to initiate some structuring of these narrative possibilities for practitioners engaged in research. So, a central premise for the framework is based on the position that artworks do not necessarily tell stories but may instead:

⁹ The term pregnant moment is traceable to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoön* (1766). An introduction to Lessing's work in the Norton Anthology includes a useful interpretation: 'the moment most likely to contain forces that can be continued in the imagination of the spectator. In visual art, therefore, a covert narrative force is always present.' See p. 553 of LEITCH, V. B. 2001. *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism*, New York, Norton.

¹⁰ Visual methodologies for interrogating pictorial content include compositional interpretation, content analysis, and semiology and Gillian Rose's text, currently in its fourth edition, provides examples of these. See ROSE, G. 2016. *Visual methodologies : an introduction to researching with visual materials*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd.

- act as conduits for stories;
- provoke narrative thinking in an audience or viewing subject;
- respond, behave, intervene, or induce events that have narrative characteristics;
- produce narrative which is situated - that is, which can only be understood in the context in which it is experienced;
- make use of people and spaces as participating narrative elements.

These aspects of a work, whether intended or not, introduce different conditions under which narrative might be considered to be at work. In addition, there is the possibility of the practitioner having a backstory, or narrative scenario, that guides their process. While in many cases my own work does indeed output narrative artefacts, this is certainly not always the case. Visual art in the west is often narrowly aligned with religious literature or literary art rather than reaching to other domains, such as those in the social sciences, which capture it differently. Considering the diversity of media and modalities that artists and designers use today, the tradition of thinking about narrative in visual art can only provide a marginal support to contemporary practitioners who might use similar techniques. It is useful then to look to other academic fields that provide a way of thinking about narrative that captures a broader range of practices more typical of the contemporary creative arts practitioner.

With this said, it is important to say the framework was directed from a consideration of my own practice. I operate in an eclectic way choosing different media and modalities from depending on the nature of the project. I also regard

narrative to be an important feature of my work and see there were many ways the practice could manifest a connection with narrative. It could be related to features apparent in the artefact or in the reception of the work by a spectator. It could also be constituted in how the work is situated in a public social space; or how it induces peoples' behaviour around it. Equally it could be unavailable to the audience but present in my mind imagining scenarios throughout the process of developing and designing the work. As such the framework developed to facilitate an understanding of narrative in practice operates from five different perspectives, which I have recognised as being present in my own work. I have named these as follows:

1. The domain of the artefact
2. The artefact as interface
3. The ratified public domain
4. The non-ratified public domain
5. The practitioner centric domain

The first two domains, which focus on the artefact and its reception, are relatively well considered in art and design discourse comparative to the others. The third and fourth perspectives are essentially social domains and are informed by work done in the social field as it relates to interaction between humans, and between humans and objects (in my case electronic artworks). The fifth perspective is one that treats the practitioner's vision as potentially loaded with narrative possibilities; these may take the form of plans, scenarios, characterisations, or orchestrations. Indeed the relationship the artist has with the work as it develops can also be

characterised as one that is social¹¹. In this way the narrative framework makes use of different narrative orientations which are imported from disciplines in social science, such as psychology, sociology and anthropology. In doing so it uses these perspectives to facilitate an understanding of narrative in art and design practice which respects the disciplinary interests of contemporary practitioner.

1.6 Summary of chapters

Practical work was ongoing throughout the programme and should be regarded as critical to the development of the framework. Without the practice the topic of narrative itself is too broad to address in any meaningful way. The practice therefore brought focus to the desk research which on the surface appears broad since it skips across different disciplinary interests in narratology. Some of these interests relate to the literary arts and others are captured by a wider set of curiosities introduced to narratology as a result of the narrativist turn indicated by Kreiswirth. Since the creative practitioner's perspective was found to be largely absent from the scholarship in narratology it was necessary to look elsewhere for evidence of how narrative is used in the language around art and design. A review

¹¹ The attachment people experience to objects of study is a social one and it is common to lose oneself in work and to form an emotional connection with aspects of a work. Anthropologist Karin Knorr-Cetina uses the modified term 'postsocial' to refer to this phenomenon. She states: "A strong thesis of 'objectualization' would imply that objects displace human beings as relationship partners and embedding environments, or that they increasingly mediate human relationships". She provides an interesting observation of this 'object-centred sociality', (a concept shared with Actor-Network Theory) in the account of expert biologist Barbara McClintock who experienced 'being down there' with the chromosomes she studied through her microscope: 'It surprised me because I actually felt like I were right down there and these were my friends.' See p. 17 KNORR-CETINA, K. 1997. *Sociality with Objects: Social Relations in Postsocial Knowledge Societies. Theory, culture and society*, 14, 30.

of journals and wider non-academic material relating to contemporary practice was collected and analysed with the help of software such as *Nvivo*. This made it possible to capture patterns in how narrative was used in discourses on art and design projects and exhibitions. The intimate knowledge I had of my own practice was then correlated with the findings from the review of academic literature on narrative and the patterns found in the use of narrative as it related to contemporary practice. This knowledge was then focussed on the development of the framework. The chapters in the thesis followed this research process

1.6.1 Outline of chapters

The review of literature and practice in Chapter 2 is divided into four key sections. First, some effort is invested in discussing the attitude to narrative in contemporary practice as a way of gaining some understanding of why it is narrative appears to be absent. There is then some treatment of the breath of narratology and responsibility it has to manage its boundaries. Here the importance of disciplinary contexts is introduced based on the sense of what Kreiswirth has said. Is narrative in art and design the same sort of thing as narrative in literature, or narrative in social science? The chapter then proceeds to review the justification of the use of narrative in the discussion of art with respect to how narrative is theorised. Different approaches to theorising narrative in art history are sampled from three sources which demonstrates distinct criteria located in the design, content and interpretation of works. These different criteria lead in the final section to a discussion of social factors as they related to the appreciation of art and design works. Ideas about narrative and dramaturgy derived from psychology, sociology

and anthropology are unfolded. There is a particular emphasis on how the work of Erving Goffman can assist in explaining how small stories can be significant for contemporary creative practitioners. The literature review sets up a rationale for the five categories of the narrative framework which is addressed later in the thesis.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodologies by explaining the role of the practical work in relation to other qualitative methods used. The methodology, when considered overall, is necessarily mixed. The role of my practice in the overall research project is described as are the qualitative methods used to discover characteristics of the use of narrative as it related to contemporary practice. Thematic Analysis (TA) as a methodology was central to this and is described in detail with references to the process as it was applied through *Nvivo*. To supplement the review of material from the data set of academic and non-academic sources, a survey of practitioners was conducted to elicit their attitudes to narrative in their work.

Chapter 4 outlines the findings from the research activities described in the methodologies chapter. Addressed first are the outcomes of the survey of practitioners conducted to glean some idea of their attitude to, and knowledge of narrative with respect to their practice. Follow that the largest section of the chapter presents the outcomes from the analysis of documents collected for the purpose of gaining an insight into how narrative was used in the language around art and design. The analysis of the data set provided a way segregating the discussion of narrative into categories which relate to how narrative was understood to be used in the articles. Here the creative practice is discussed in parallel with the findings

from the qualitative analysis. The discussion of work serves to anchor some of the themes which are developed towards the narrative framework in the following chapter. To complete the chapter the level of formality in the use of narrative is discussed across both the academic and non-academic sources which made up the set of data. This discussion compliments the previous sections of the chapter in providing some insight about how narrative is characterised in the language about art.

Chapter 5 is given to describing the narrative framework which is done over three main sections of the chapter. The first explains the nomenclature of the framework classifications providing the premise for the terminology used to refer to the five orientations. In the section that follows each of the orientations are then described separately with examples from either the review of literature and practice, the data set, or from my own work. Each of these five narrative orientations point towards a family of academic resources which can be used to support the particular understanding of narrative that is relevant to the orientation. Some of these academic supports are already part of the scholarship of art and design while others are not typically regarded as cognate to either discipline. In section 5.4 a second level of classification is introduced. This is to differentiate between works that make use of orthodox academic resources as opposed to those proposed to help extend the discourse on narrative to works that invoke small stories as a consequence of their intervention in public spaces.

Chapter 6 concludes by collecting together the main arguments in the thesis and summarising the outcomes. Some indications of shortcoming in the research are mentioned and indications of research directions that would be of interest to follow.

Finally, there are five appendices at the end which are cited throughout the body of the thesis. The most important is the description of works in Appendix 1. This provides a context for the works produced during the research and describes them in detail with supporting illustrations. It was decided that the practical work would be maintained in an appendix not because it was only of peripheral importance, but to help with the overall flow of the argument in the thesis. The appendices also contain a copy of the survey of practitioners, and supporting material for a study conducted in a local museum. There is also a list of presentations given as part of the study.

1.6.2 A note on the referencing of artworks in the thesis and appendices

Rather than describing the practical works directly in the body of the thesis they have instead been placed together in Appendix 1 where they are numbered A1.1 to A1.8. This is to facilitate a better flow in the main thesis. When appropriate, examples with images are referenced in the body so the reader is not required to always refer to the appendix to see an example of work being discussed. The appendix nevertheless provides a full explanation of the work and its background context. When cited in the thesis body, works are referenced in accordance to how

they are numbered in the appendix. For example, a work such as *The Tailor* will be referenced inline as *The Tailor* (A1.4) to locate it properly in appendix 1. Where the work is named again within the same paragraph the reference to the appendix is not used.

In some cases, a work in the appendix will have more than one illustration, therefore references to images of works will be cited in accordance to the figure numbers in the appendix. An image related to the work, and not presented directly in the body of the thesis, will be numbered, such as Figure A1.4.2, to locate it precisely in the appendix. Where an image of a work is used directly in the body of the thesis it will be numbered in accordance with the numbering system in the body of the thesis. For example, the first image in chapter 2 will be numbered Figure 2.1, the second Figure 2.2, and so on.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Overview

The past half century since the advent of structuralism there has been developed a lexicon which names in detail the features employed in narrative discourses. Much of this terminology is captured in dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and handbooks, examples of which are *A Dictionary of Narratology* (Prince, [1987] 2003), the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* (Herman et al., 2005), or the online Living Handbook of Narratology (LHN) (Hühn, 2013). In the language around art however, there appears only limited evidence of this language being used to describe how narrative might be at work in the kind of artefacts or methods that come out of studio practices in art schools. Theoretical criteria exist in the literature to rationalise pictorial narrative in art history discourses, however when it comes to contemporary art it is much less obvious to say how narrative is relevant.

Some explanation for the apparent absence of narrative investment in art throughout the twentieth century stems from the fact that, to a large degree, pluralistic approaches increasingly characterised practice. Found objects, mixed media, public art, happenings, political activism, conceptual art, performance and land art present approaches to practice that dominated the discourse on art as it entered the postmodern era. In many of these practices the audience's engagement with artworks has been described as interactive or *participative*¹². The arrival of

¹² Claire Bishop has presented the case for the consideration of art as participative with a concept of interactivity that operates on a social political and aesthetic level distinct to

digital technologies in the latter half of the century compounded a shift of emphasis from artist to audience by introducing interaction possibilities as a design feature of electronic works.

In a similar way to how interaction has caused problems for the consideration of narrative in games¹³, concepts such as chronology, causality, linearity, and story could arguably be troublesome in the context of artworks open to participation and interaction by being non-linear or non-sequential. However, arguments about non-linearity have not stood as convincing in the dismissal of narrative in games or

how it is imagined with regard to contemporary electronic works. See her treatment of the notion of participation as one that predates digital in BISHOP, C. 2012. *Artificial hells : participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*, London ; New York, Verso Books. This resonates with the views of others such as Steve Dixon who stated 'all art is interactive', see p. 559 of DIXON, S. 2007. *Digital performance : a history of new media in theater, dance, performance art, and installation*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press. Roy Ascott also expressed the view that it should be assumed "all art is interactive now, whether the work consists in the static field of a painting or a dynamic system in cyberspace". See p. 266 of ASCOTT, R. 2004. *Planetary Technoetics: Art, Technology and Consciousness*. Ibid.37, 111-116. and that "Interface is all context, just as content is all interactivity between the viewer and the interface-as-art" ASCOTT, R. 1993 [2003]. *Telenoia*. In: SHANKEN, E. A. (ed.) *Telematic embrace : visionary theories of art, technology, and consciousness*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹³Access to internet technologies from the mid-1980s brought hypertext and interactive fiction into academic consideration. *Uncle Roger* by Judy Malloy (1986) and *Afternoon, a story* by Michael Joyce (1987) were pioneering works which spawned efforts to distinguishing electronic literature from games. Narrative as it was applied as a set of theories in fiction was poised against ludology, as expressed by Gonzalo Frasca, which did not deny narrative featured as part of the engagement with games but its role was much diminished comparative to interactivity. At the turn of the millennium authors contributing to the debate about interactivity and narrative in cyberspace and games included Janet Murray, Gonzalo Frasca, Jesper Juul, Espen Aarseth and Marie-Laure Ryan. See JUUL, J. 1998. A Clash between Game and Narrative. *Digital Arts and Culture conference*. Bergen, Norway, AARSETH, E. J. 1997. *Cybertext : perspectives on ergodic literature*, Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins University Press, FRASCA, G. 2003. Simulation versus Narrative: Introduction to Ludology. In: WOLF, M. J. P. & PERRON, B. (eds.) *Video/Game/Theory*. Routledge, MURRAY, J. H. 1997. *Hamlet on the holodeck : the future of narrative in cyberspace*, New York, Free Press. RYAN, M.-L. 2004b. Will New Media Produce New Narratives? In: RYAN, M.-L. (ed.) *Narrative across media : the languages of storytelling*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press

literature¹⁴. In fact, circumventing sequential structures in textual works such as *The Garden of the Forking Paths* by Jorge Luis Borges or the works of the *Oulipo* have attracted much theorisation in narratology particularly with the arrival of the internet and Hypertext Fiction¹⁵. A similar point could be made about James Joyce whose stream-of-conscious techniques have been a popular target for narratological analysis¹⁶. If linear plotlines, with straight forward causal chains of action, are not regarded as necessary for inclusion of verbal media within narrative scholarship, it does not seem reasonable for those same criteria are used as a justification for visual (or other interactive or performance) media are unsuitable for narrative analysis. What it is that validates certain texts and artefacts for narrative study is addressed in this chapter.

The review of literature is divided into four key sections which link together to provide a basis for the classes that make up the narrative framework. As stated in the introduction these classes relate to the *artefact*, the *artefact as interface*, the

¹⁴ Espen Aarseth has argued that linear and labyrinthine paths have been confused in the discussion of literary narrative as opposing textual structures. See pp. 5-8 in AARSETH, E. J. 1997. *Cybertext : perspectives on ergodic literature*, Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins University Press.

¹⁵ The above texts are available in WARDROP-FRUIIN, N. & MONTFORT, N. 2003. *The NewMediaReader*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press. They are collected under section I of the book entitled *The Complex, the Changing, and the Indeterminate* and have been influential in relation to the development of Hypertext fiction in the late 1980s and 1990s by authors such as Michael Joyce and Stuart Moulthrop.

¹⁶ As an instance, the work of James Joyce has been used to support the development of narrative theories that account for literature traditionally excluded from narrative analysis. Monika Fludernik's conception of natural narratology is a prominent contemporary example. Fludernik's *Towards a Natural Narratology* published in 1996 is built upon earlier considerations of Joyce available in papers such as FLUDERNIK, M. 1986. Narrative and Its Development in "Ulysses". *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 16, 15-40. *Towards a Natural Narratology* will be addressed later in this chapter.

ratified public domain, the non-ratified public domain, and finally the practitioner centric domain.

Section 2.2 first expands on the perceived lack of interest in narrative from the perspective of creative practitioners. The idea that narrative is simply irrelevant for contemporary practitioners is complicated by another view that narrative is under-theorised. This is presented not only as a problem for creative arts practitioners but also narratology generally. Section 2.3 progresses by looking at related problems in the way narratology has been conceived to deal with narrative as a topic that has its primacy in verbal media. If the central aim of narratology continues to be understood as seeking to know narrative in all its forms, then an exclusive emphasis on language produces additional problems not only for creative practices but also for narratology itself. Within this section the importance of disciplinary contexts is brought into focus with some sample definitions of narrative from different disciplines in narratology and the social sciences. These definitions illustrate some agreed criteria but also show significant incompatibilities when attempting to transfer statements about narrative from one context to another. Section 2.4 draws then on three texts *Pictures of Romance*, *Artist as Narrator*, and *Narrative Pictures* to demonstrate some incompatibilities in the discussion of narrative in pictorial art. These emphasise approaches used by critics and art historians that relate not only to properties of works but also to cognitive strategies applied in the interpretation of pictorial content as narrative. The shift from an emphasis on properties of paintings to cognitive strategies in the interpretation of works, opens the opportunity to import expertise from social science as part of the

academic knowledge required to better understand the narrative experience of art. While psychological perspectives may augment cultural perspectives to better understand how audiences can have a narrative experience of pictures, this helps the contemporary practitioner only marginally. Since contemporary practice is characterised by pluralistic approaches not solely based on visuality section 2.5 proceeds to extend the argument for social factors to be regarded as important resources for the understanding of narrative in art. The attitude to art practice in this section is built on the social as the basis for aesthetic appreciation, and the attitude to narrative is located in everyday storytelling as opposed to grand narratives of history and literary art.

The course of the discussion in this chapter recognises there is an abundance of existing work done in narratology that can already be applied to the appreciation of contemporary art. This existing work primarily benefits the first two classes of the framework which relate to the *domain of the artefact* and the *artefact as interface*. However, the discussion also underlines the need for the understanding of narrative to be extended in order to allow for a narrative appreciation of works that are underpinned by social rather than visual aesthetics. This extended appreciation of narrative contributes to the other classes in the framework which are the *ratified public domain*, the *non-ratified public domain*.

2.2 The absence of narrative in the discourses of contemporary art

The idea of narrative being troublesome when connected to contemporary art practice is a view recently shared by the art historian James Elkins who stated that ‘modernism depends, to some degree, on the abandonment of visual narrative’. In

an unfinished essay¹⁷, Elkins begins a section entitled *The Place of Narrative in Contemporary Art* with an observation that 'narrative is one of the crucial issues in visual studies, but one with the smallest literature.' (Ibid). He goes on to say:

The first thing that needs to be said about 20th or 21st century visual narrative, as it is practiced by artists, is that it is moribund. It isn't quite dead—it's always possible to name narrative artists like Eric Fischl—but it is as close to dead as it can get. (Elkins, 2015, p.38)

Of course Elkins is aware that the complete absence of narrative in academic language around art in the late twentieth century has been interrupted by some important texts such as *On Narrative* (Mitchell, 1981) and *Pictures of Romance* (Steiner, 1988b) which have provided considered thought about narrative in the visual arts¹⁸. His point nevertheless is to do with contemporary art, and much of the treatment in such texts is focused largely on pre-twentieth century works prior to Impressionism¹⁹. This continues to be the case with evidence in recent analyses being largely associated with the history of painting and aesthetics. For example,

¹⁷ Time and Narrative in Visual Art is a fifty-page essay by Elkins which was unfinished at the time of writing. The work was published as a work in progress on academia.edu when last accessed on 10/11/2015. At the opening of the essay the author states: 'Note to readers: This is an unfinished essay on the depiction of time in visual art. It is available as a downloadable pdf document at:

https://www.academia.edu/165600/The_Visual_chapter_on_Time_and_Narrative

¹⁸ He appears to cite Nelson Goodman's *Twisted Tales*, published in W.J.T.Mitchell's *On Narrative*, later in the essay. Elkins addressed the issues of 'order of telling' and 'order of occurrence' which are dealt with by Goodman in *Twisted Tales*. It can only be assumed this is the specific essay being referenced as Elkins has not directly listed Goodman in his draft notes at the end of the essay.

¹⁹ Chapters 5 and 6 of Steiner's book does include discussion of Pablo Picasso, Georges Seurat, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein's work. See STEINER, W. 1988a. *Divide and Narrate: Seurat, Warhol, and Lichtenstein. Pictures of romance : form against context in painting and literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

the 2009 special issue of the Journal of Art and Aesthetics, also published as a book later the same year (Carroll, 2009b), carries twelve papers on narrative relative to art and aesthetics but only two explicitly dealing with visual narrative (*Narrative in Comics* by Henry John Pratt (2009) and *Narrative Pictures* by Bence Nanay (2009). Other writings around this time include Margarite Hoogvliet's *How To Tell A Fairy Tale With Images: Narrative Theories and French Paintings from the Early Nineteenth Century* (2010, p.198) who argues that visual images can generate a narrative but that analyses should not rely on the same criteria as that for textual narratives. This is essentially a transmedial²⁰ position about how narrative properties are understood to be at play differently, comparative to other media, in paintings regarded as capable of telling stories. Hoogvliet's references to Werner Wolf's popular earlier essay, *Narrative and Narrativity: a narratological reconceptualization and its applicability to the visual arts* (2003b), demonstrates an appreciation for the role of viewer interpretation and cognition in visual narrative. While cognitive narratological themes are not explicit in Hoogvliet they are addressed more directly in Michael Ranta's *(Re-)Creating Order: Narrativity and Implied World Views in Pictures* (2013) which details the application to art

20 Transmediality is a major field within contemporary narratology and has been summarised by David Herman in the statement that narrative is medium independent. He has expressed the view that 'although narrative in different media exploit a common stock of narrative design principles, they exploit them in different, media specific ways, or, rather in a certain range of ways determined by the properties of the medium.' (p.51) HERMAN, D. 2004. Towards a Transmedial Narratology. In: RYAN, M.-L. (ed.) *Narrative across media : the languages of storytelling*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. Herman has written extensively on transmediality and about how generalising narrative design principles across different contexts. See in particular HERMAN, D. 2002. *Story logic : problems and possibilities of narrative*, Lincoln, Neb, University of Nebraska Press.

of *cognitive narratology* borrowed primarily from writings by Monika Fludernik (Fludernik, 1996, Fludernik, 2003) and David Herman (Herman, 2004, Herman, 2003, Herman, 2010, Herman, 2013). In all this however there is little evidence of any discussion of contemporary art work; which would appear to give credibility to the observation made by Elkins, that narrative is a dead issue.

If we were looking to build a case for the relevance of narrative in the study of art it might be possible to list the influence of theorists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963), Roland Barthes (1977 (1966), 1974), Seymour Chatman (1978), and Paul Ricœur (1984) who quickly come to mind when we think about narrative and art in the twentieth century. These texts are commonly available in libraries in art colleges, but are relevant due to the importance of the semiotic and phenomenological traditions in the study of art. These academics reference art but are not directly writing about narrative in visual art *per se*, and some questions have been raised as to why these theorists and philosophers have become key influences for practicing artists. For instance, in an essay entitled, *The Structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss and the Visual Arts* (1977), the sculptor Art Brenner queries why structural linguistics in the form described by Levi Strauss should ever be used as an ‘intellectual justification’ of an artist’s work (p.304). Apart from understanding art as a language, as opposed to a metaphor for language, the potential prejudice demonstrated by Levi-Strauss (in Brenner's view) in ranking art in the way he does – that is, music at the highest level, poetry lower on the hierarchy, and representational visual art further down - demonstrates an arbitrary application of structuralism based on a poor understanding of visual art

as language. Levi-Strauss's contribution to art is therefore to be regarded with some suspicion according to Brenner. So even where an academic bridge joining narrative to art may be available through key theorists there has been questions around their relevance to studio practice.

An art historian of Elkins' calibre will no doubt be aware of some explicit labelling of art as narrative in the late twentieth century. The *American Narrative/Story Art: 1967-1977* exhibition in Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, Texas, 1978 curated by Paul Schimmel is an example which frames the work of well-known artists such as Vito Acconci, Laurie Anderson, John Baldessari, Denis Oppenheim, Martha Rosler, and William Wegman. So maybe there is some data available to support his view that narrative was never 'quite dead' as far as practitioners were concerned. Nevertheless, having interpreted it as a topic largely absent to the interests of twentieth-century discourse Elkins appears on the verge of suggesting narrative is entirely irrelevant to contemporary practitioners.

In painting, photography, computer graphics, and printmaking, the question of narrative is pushed off the edge of the world altogether. it [sic] just isn't raised in the majority of studio art critiques and exhibition reviews. As far as art students are concerned, it's an asked and-answered question: modernism depends, to some degree, on the abandonment of visual narrative. (Elkins, 2015, p. 39)

The statement seems to leave little room for interpretation and would certainly echo the experience I had with how narrative is treated within art school education. One could be forgiven for accepting the argument then that narrative is mostly dead for art practitioners; except Elkins also makes the point that narrative is

'radically undertheorized' (p.38). To suggest it is under-theorised raises the possibility that narrative, in the way has been defined in formal and structural terms, was never really alive for artists in the first place. The idea that a painting could be structured to comply with a concept of story that unfolds through a beginning, middle, and end is applicable only in a limited way to visual art practice²¹; and certainly, this is largely incompatible with painting since the modernist era. It is difficult to think how such a view of narrative would be useful with respect to a Jackson Pollock action painting. However, this way of theorising narrative is not the only model, it is simply the one that has dominated in the study of literature and time-based media. From within narratology Mieke Bal, who has been credited with the popular uptake of the term *narratologie*²², has reflected a similar criticism about how narrative analyses have been limited by both the objects studied and the approaches used. She states:

I do not really think that the corpus of predominantly narrative texts and artefacts has been sufficiently explored with the help of narratology, or that the impact of narrative on cultural hotbeds of meaning making has been clearly understood. On the contrary most studies of narrative texts are weak precisely in that their authors fail to use adequate descriptive tools. Thus they fail to account for the subjectivity of their interpretations and to open these up for discussion. But the point I am making is that even if one assumes there have been enough narrative analyses of narrative texts, it is obvious there

²¹ We do in fact witness this argument being made in relation to pre- and early-renaissance paintings. For instance, Nelson Goodman explores the structure of paintings that allow readings to follow certain prescribed paths. See GOODMAN, N. [1980] 1981. *Twisted Tales; or, Story, Study, and Symphony*. In: MITCHELL, W. J. T. (ed.) *On narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press Wendy Steiner also deals with this in some detail which I deal with further in section 2.4 of the chapter.

²² See previous footnote 1.

have been hardly any narrative analyses of non-narrative texts, which undermines the very generic distinction on which the idea of 'narrative texts' is based. One may want to replace the approach with a different one, be it ideological, psychoanalytic, or rhetorical, but one may also, instead, want to mobilize narratological insights for other objects and approaches. Here, in contrast, narratology can help supply insights that the field where different objects are studied has traditionally not itself developed. (Bal, 2009, p.13)

Bal incidentally uses the term 'text' as one interchangeable with 'artifact' and explicitly allows it to reference visual artefacts such as paintings. To suggest that any concept might be radically undertheorized is to raise the possibility then that in fact it may bear some more or less relevance if only it was properly theorised. Therefore, studio art critiques that draw on under-theorised approaches to narrative possibly act only to serve a view of narrative that has been traditionally inappropriate for artists. It is possible to see the absence of narrative as one not reflecting necessarily its lack of importance for artists, but instead one which is a consequence of a tradition that framed narrative as ill-suited to what it is practitioners think or do. Elkins has previously written about influences within pictorial modernism and postmodernism being *anti-narrative*, or works simply *non-narrative* (Elkins, 1991). In effect artists of the modernist period forward may be characterised as working against narrative rather than with it; avoiding narrative then, may arguably be seen as an aesthetic goal. However, avoiding narrative, or working against it, is not the same thing as saying narrative is not present. While traditionally those critiquing visual art may have tended to abandon narrative, because its *literariness* was incompatible with philosophies that dominated twentieth century art discourse, a closer examination of the attitudes of creative

practitioners will show that a sizable proportion of artists in fact do see narrative as a feature of their practice.

There is recently some notable evidence of narrative being seriously considered in contemporary art and design by practitioners. A survey of 44 art school graduates conducted as part of this research, and discussed later in Chapter 3, showed 52% regarded narrative to be a feature of their work. A further 43% indicated that on 'some occasions' narrative was involved in their work and/or practice. That is to say only 5%, of the candidates explicitly rejected narrative as relevant to their work²³. While surveys are limited in their capacity to capture much information about the general context of understanding candidates have there are other events and literature which shows a more sympathetic view of narrative from the perspective of practitioners. The Narrative in Practice (NIP) symposium organised by postgraduate students of University of the Arts London (UAL) is one example of this growing interest practitioners have in narrative and how it can be spoken about in relation to their work and methods. Tricia Austin appears influential in this regard through the postgraduate MA in Narrative Environments and PhD programmes at Central Saint Martins; although the focus is oriented to design, with a particular emphasis on architecture and exhibition design. The NIP forum was initiated in 2011 and was organised again in 2013 and 2016. In the general literature on art and design practice, it surfaces sporadically in contemporary journals such as *Image and Narrative*, *Leonardo* and proceedings for conferences

²³ A copy of the survey with a summary of the results, is included in Appendix 4.

such as ISEA²⁴. So, there is data to be found, when artists speak for themselves, that narrative is an important aspect of their work. It is therefore possible to harbour some scepticism about what evidence there is to suggest that narrative is for contemporary practitioners 'as close to dead as it can get' (Elkins, 2015, p.38). Rather than an absence of relevance *per se*, maybe it is more credible to say there is an absence of relevant language to describe in any precise way what it is that in contemporary practitioners think about narrative.

While there are concepts and language in the study of visual narrative they do not describe story as a functional attribute of the process of artistic practice. The critique of twentieth and twenty-first century art may have been seen as encouraging the education of artists in the mind to avoid narrative, but this is only one part of the reason why artists fail to appear in the general literature in narratology or participate in the ISSN's annual conferences²⁵. If narratology's breadth is the study of all things narrative, then one would anticipate some investment within the existing narratological network²⁶ to engage in a more inclusive way with creative arts. The way narratology has been conceived since its

²⁴ I deal with these in later in chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis.

²⁵ When artists do show up they are sometimes received as an unusual presence. I had a discussion about this with Simon Clarke at the ISSN's 2013 International Conference on Narrative in Manchester after presenting his paper, entitled 'Digital Undeadliness: Performative Narratives of Speculative Obsolescence'. His presentation mode would have been better described as a performance, and deviated dramatically from the conventions of the conference. Towards the end of his slot he broke with the expected format by shredding his paper above his head. He then proceeded to read and hand out the shredded pieces to the somewhat bewildered and partially shocked delegates.

²⁶ See chapter 1 where this network described as a combination of the ISSN, the ENN, and the Nordic Network.

inception however, makes it difficult to see how it could ever have been extended to represent disciplines not dominated by verbal media.

2.3 Narratology - its breath and boundaries

2.3.1 Structuralist roots

The study of narrative is recognised today for the breadth of the academic territory it addresses. As mentioned previously it is what Martin Kreiswirth has referred to in the humanities as the ‘narrativist turn’ (2000, pp.294-300); that is, the relevance of narrative to a range of diverse disciplines from law to medicine to literature to sociology. It is possible then to see the study of narrative beginning with the broadest of views about what the legitimate targets are for narrative research being borne out by narrativist turn. But, with respect to the arts, it was not long before the vision of narrative being everywhere became channelled into identifying verbal and time-based media as *the* prototype narrative objects. ‘An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives’ explicitly demonstrated the breadth of that early vision for narratology:

The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances – as though any material were fit to receive man’s stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think of Carpaccio’s Saint Ursula), stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. Moreover, under this infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is or has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their

narratives, enjoyment of which is often shared by men with different, even opposing, 1 cultural backgrounds. Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international. transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself. (Barthes, 1977 (1966), p.79)

While shifts in attitude in the early part of the twentieth century set in motion the elevation of the status of narrative in literature as an artform worthy of study²⁷, the arrival of structuralism brought the pretence of scientific objectivity to bear on this artform. Narratology grew out of the premise that the organisational structures of language could be extended beyond the sentence into a grammar of stories. Those who published in the seminal Communications, 8, 1966 entitled *Recherches sémiologiques : l'analyse structurale du récit*²⁸ introduced a project essentially focussed on the description and classification of the underlying structure of narratives. The idea of linguistics as a foundational model for narrative was imagined as an adaptation of principles derived from Ferdinand de Saussure's *A Course in General Linguistics* and the Chomskyan notion of *deep structure* or *generative grammar* which was also in circulation. Linguistics understood as a semiotic system applicable to stories appeared credible when taken in the light of

²⁷ The cultural status of the novel at the beginning of the twentieth century was in flux. Wallace Martin has concisely charted how approaches to the appreciation of literary art shifted from an emphasis on 'form' (poetic form) to 'technique' (writing style) (1986) thus opening the way for the novel to be considered on an equal footing to poetry. Shklovsky's essay *Art and Technique* (1926), using the example of Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, illustrated how artistic technique (poetics) was just as accessible in the form of a novel as it was in poetry.

²⁸ Communications, 8, 1966 is the seminal issue of the journal which carried the first collection of essays now regarded as initiating what came to be known as Classic or Francophone Structuralism. Key authors published in this issue included: Roland Barthes, A.J. Greimas, Claude Bremond, Umberto Eco, Christian Metz, Tzvetan Todorov, and Gerard Genette. References above to Barthes' 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' was first published in French in Communications, 8. It was later made available in *Image Music Text* as an English translation in 1977.

patterns uncovered in Russian formalist studies of folktales especially as they were articulated in the work of Vladimir Propp (1958). The adoption of these ideas to the analysis to narrative showed the appeal of a methodology that promised to be both systematic and scientific. The concept of a morphology of language being transferable to storytelling found promise in the relationships Propp uncovered between *character functions* and the formation of plot in traditional folktales presented in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1958)²⁹. According to Barthes, the morphology of narrative grammar adopted by the structuralist project released the discussion of narrative from relying on ‘explanations and critiques that build on top of the mythical concepts of genius and talent’(1977 (1966), p.81). In this way, subjective aesthetic or compositional interpretation - what Gillian Rose refers to as 'the good eye'³⁰ - was supposedly advanced and replaced by a commitment to a more objective method of analysis. Propp's morphology is influential today particularly in computer based approaches to generative narrative but has arguably

²⁹ Propp's morphology continues to be influential today. His work has been particularly influential on projects concerned with to modelling emergent content and continues to inspire contemporary narrative studies using narrative algorithms in computer-based approaches. Jan Christoph Meister 'How to Study Narratives by Computer: Crowdsourcing Narrative Analysis via the Web' presented at ISSN Conference in Manchester University in 2013 is one example. The International Conference on Digital Narrative and Storytelling (ICIDS) series is also peppered with applications of his character types which have been regarded as suitable for programming characters with personality that can unfold narrative scenarios in virtual or game settings. Work done under the banner of the Kaleidoscope Network provide good examples. See DETTORI, G., GIANNETTI, T., PAIVA, A. & VAZ, A. (eds.) 2006. Technology-mediated narrative environments for learning, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

³⁰ See Chapter 3 of ROSE, G. 2016. *Visual methodologies : an introduction to researching with visual materials*, London, SAGE Publications Ltd. Rose describes compositional interpretation as the good eye. This is essentially a form of visual analysis based on the connoisseurship of trained experts who rely on considerable contextual information (e.g. the artworld, material culture and society of the period, etc.,) to interpret visual high art. (p.35).

not served artistic practice very well³¹. This may also be true of structuralism in general. By proposing a deductive method to account for narrative structure everywhere structuralism essentially acted to level the difference between works by focussing on their universal features; story elements that could be transferred from one medium to another. While post-structuralism emphasised difference by underlining the reading strategies of an audience in interpreting the significance of works³², structuralism focused on semiotic intentions embedded in narrative texts. In doing so it is possible in retrospect to see, as Elkins indicates, it would inevitably sit poorly with notions of individualism and aesthetic purity which characterised dominant philosophical approaches to visual art³³. The methodology that

³¹ Examples of generative narrative have arguably served computer science better than art or narrative and the work entitled *Façade* is a case in kind. While the narrative is driven by a highly sophisticated emotional engine developed by Michael Mateas the resulting narrative is remarkably unengaging. See MATEAS, M. & STERN, A. 2005. *Façade* [Online]. Available: <http://www.interactivestory.net/> [Accessed 12/12/09]. This work has received much attention and Andrew Stern was the invited keynote at the ICIDS 2008. Marie-Laure Ryan's questionable description of the virtual acting being 'superb' possibly underlines the seduction of the technology rather than the artistic merit of the dramatic performance. See p.173, RYAN, M.-L. 2006a. *Avatars of story*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

³² Scholars associated with reader response theory include Wolfgang Iser, Gerald Prince, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jonathan Culler and Stanley E. Fish. A selection of writings which includes some of these key authors and summarises this critical position can be found in TOMPKINS, J. P. 1980. *Reader-response criticism : from formalism to post-structuralism*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

³³ For instance, Clement Greenberg's notion of pure painting rested on criteria that insisted works to be unique, irreducible, and independent. The experience produced by art, according to Greenberg's philosophy, must be purely aesthetic and unavailable through any other form. Jeanne Willette provides a synopsis of his influential 1961 essay observing that 'Film and theater are defined by storytelling and narrative, enhanced by illusions of everyday reality. Following Greenberg's line of reasoning, realism and storytelling and illusionism should be eliminated from painting.' See WILLETTE, J. S. M. 2012. "Modernist Painting" by Clement Greenberg. *Art History Unstuffed* [Online]. Available from: <http://arthistoryunstuffed.com/modernist-painting-by-clement-greenberg/> [Accessed 3rd February 2014].

structuralism brought has no doubt underlined the celebration of narratology's breath in science and humanities but can be similarly understood as contributing to its lack of traction within the creative arts.

2.3.2 The importance of disciplinary contexts

Recognising the ubiquity of narrative in human life and culture may have established the claim for a dedicated field of narratology to address it. It may also, by consequence, have imposed on the field some obligation to clarify that not everything is worthy of narrative analysis. As with any academic field, narratology has not been exempted from the practical requirement of managing its boundaries - whether it be defining what is, or is not, narrative, or by declaring what is simply too insignificant for analysis.

Peter Lamarque, in an essay entitled *On Not Expecting Too Much from Narrative* (2004) expresses the view that everything defined as narrative may not be worthy of study. In what he describes as a 'mildly deflationary account of narrative' (p. 393) he notes: 'it is not the fact that [great literary] works are narratives that gives them interest, rather the fact that they are literary narratives' (Ibid, p. 393). His point is not that he believes only literary narratives are valid objects for narrative analysis. Instead, he sees the minimum conditions required for a narrative to be identified as a narrative are so minimal, that everything recognised as a narrative may simply not be interesting enough to study. For this reason, he goes on to suggest that:

In nearly every case, a higher priority should be given to locating a narrative in a practice, thus determining its point and the conventions it follows, than

to giving focus either to its internal structure or its referential or truth status. Until it is known what kind of narrative is involved, the relevance of its structures or semantic characteristics cannot be determined. (Lamarque, 2004, p.401)

For Lamarque, it is the disciplinary interests of a particular field of study that are critical. Less important is whether a particular strip of discourse demonstrates the proper ingredients of narrative. For literary fiction it may well be the formal structures of a classic novel that are especially appropriate to study, but as Margarite Hoogvliet (2010, p.198) has argued, these surely are not the same criteria to be examined in visual art.

While Lamarque's proposition of locating the study of narrative within specific practices seems sensible much of the discourse on narrative in visual art has been constrained simply because it is visual; or, more precisely, non-verbal. If one seeks out definitions of narrative they tend to work more in favour of the verbal arts by insisting on language as the prototype medium for storytelling. Marie-Laure Ryan has made significant efforts at theorising narrative across media (Ryan, 2006a, Ryan, 2004a) but she has also foregrounded the primacy of natural language. The importance Ryan delegates to natural language, as an *innate* narrative medium, has not explicitly excluded visual art from narratological analysis. But it certainly appears to relegate it to a subservient status which she has characterised as 'parasitic' (Ryan, 2014). In an entry entitled *Narration in Various Media* in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, she states:

The innate affinity of narrative and language can be explained by the fact that narrative is not something that is perceived by the senses: it is constructed by

the mind, either out of data provided by life or out of invented materials. Similarly, as a mode of representation, language speaks to the mind rather than to the senses, though it is of course through the senses that its signs are perceived. Thanks to its semantic nature and its power of articulation, language is the only semiotic system (besides formal notation systems) in which it is possible to formulate propositions. Stories are about characters placed in a changing world, and narration is crucially dependent on the ability of a medium to single out existents and attribute properties to them. Neither images nor pure sound possesses this intrinsic ability: sound has no meaning, and pictures can show, but they cannot refer (Ryan, 2014)

In general, where we do find attempts to define narrative the efforts tend to be largely unhelpful when viewed from the perspective of a practicing artist. For instance, Noël Carroll in a series of essays on the philosophy of art, in seeking to define what he refers to as the *narrative connection*, states:

Narrative requires that the events and/or states of affairs represented be perspicuously time-ordered. A narrative is not simply a series of events arranged helter-skelter; a narrative is at least a sequence of events, where “sequence” implies temporal ordering.(2001a, p.120)

The idea of *time ordered causal events* is typically at the root of many defining statements on narrative. The general definition in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) indicates narrative to be ‘n. a spoken or written account of connected events; a story’. While some definitions insist on multiple events we can also refer to the authority of the *Dictionary of Narratology* where Gerald Prince allows for single event narratives, with the proviso that they must be narrated; that is, told.

The representation (as product and process, object and act, structure and structuration) of one or more real or fictive EVENTS communicated by one, two, or several (more or less overt) NARRATORS to one, two, or several

(more or less overt) NARRATEE. [...] even such possibly uninteresting texts as "The man opened the door," "The goldfish died," and "The glass fell on the floor" are narratives'. (Prince, 1987, p.58)

These definitions are so vague but do nevertheless insist on certain conditions (events and tellings) and verbal language appears as a critical feature. But these may simply be definitions that advocate a particular understanding of what a narrative object should be. Not all disciplines however will be able to subscribe to these constraints.

For Jerome Bruner, who sees narrative as a primary mode of human thought (1986b), it is unsuitable to constrain the psychological concept of story in the way described in definitions above.

I think we would do well with as loose fitting a constraint as we can manage concerning what a story must "be" to be a story. And the one that strikes me as the most serviceable is the one with which we began: narrative deals with the vicissitudes of intention. (1986a, p.17)

Bruner's 'vicissitudes of intention' refers to a variation, or change, of states of intention. It does not demand them to be ordered in any particular way. Intentions, which can be loosely understood as mental strategies given over to partially or temporarily explaining an experience, may be successive or they may alternate. Bruner's view, coming from a perspective in psychology, is that the human brain is designed to naturally grab at plausible explanations of an unexpected event. Elsewhere he uses the term *folk psychology* to characterise this cognitive system at work.

Since its [*folk psychology's*] organizing principle is narrative rather than conceptual, I shall have to consider the nature of narrative and how it is built around established canonical expectations and the mental management of deviations from such expectations. Thus armed, we shall look more closely at how narrative organizes experience, ... (Bruner, 1990, p.35) [*my emphasis*]

Bruner's constraint on narrative, is much less a definition, and is flexible for the purpose of facilitating a consideration of the human mind from the perspective of a psychologist. While verbal explications may expose a human narrative thought process, any failure to verbalise those thoughts does not mean narrative thinking is not occurring. After all, one can be shocked into silence by the thought that something happened - or didn't happen. For example, the absence of an 'expected' event can induce narrative thoughts. One can understand the revelation, 'Elinor did not come home last night', initiating a narrative but depicting only one event (as in Prince's definition above). Other events are not explicit, but should be recognised as still there, represented in thought and experience but not necessarily in language. One could invoke the argument then that any expression considered to be a narrative in its own right requires language but narrative itself is pre-linguistic³⁴.

³⁴ The idea of narrative as a fundamental function of the human brain is recognised in narrative literature. Apart from Jerome Bruner, a biological basis for narrative is discussed in MANCING, H. 2005. Biological Foundations of Narrative. In: HERMAN, D., JAHN, M. & RYAN, M.-L. (eds.) *Routledge encyclopedia of narrative theory*. London ; New York: Routledge. Mancing states that the 'first stage of human development beyond the episodic stage is the "mimetic" stage, a pre-linguistic, gesture based mode of communication. From this developed the "mythic" of storytelling.' (p.44) This entry cites academics from a range of disciplines in philosophy (Calvin, Dennett), psychology (Donald, Turner), sociology (Fisher) and neurology (Gazzaniga) who subscribe to this view. Elsewhere Mark Turner's 'The Literary Mind' (1996) speculates on a biological premise for 'narrative imagining' which is pre-linguistic and is there present before language develops as a mental faculty in the human brain. Paul Cobley uses the terms *ontogeny* and *phylogeny* in discussing the origin of narrative in human evolution. See pp. 21-28 of COBLEY, P. 2001. *Narrative*, London ; New York,

If narrative can be understood to operate at such a fundamental level of human thought and experience, there is much wisdom then in Peter Lamarque's view that narrative must be located in specific practices for any definition to be sensible. And while verbal, sequential, or causal connections may in some circumstances constitute a relevant basis for narrative in contemporary art practice, on other occasions such constraints may simply be inappropriate. In another way, if narrative is defined as something that 'organizes experience' (Bruner, 1990, p.35) then there is much flexibility for how it may be understood to occur as a phenomenon within the processes applied by creative practitioners. If what artists do is to produce experiences for their audiences, then narrative thinking is surely a basic constituent of their practice. Forums such as the NIP in London have begun addressing this issue but there is currently little shape on what it is creative practitioners mean when they describe narrative to be an important aspect of their practice. The purpose of the narrative framework is to contribute to this discourse in a way that provides some structure around narrative concepts which are sensible for what it is artists do.

To this point the chapter has focussed on establishing the limitations of narrative within academic discourses that relate to art and design. The following section will summarise some important perspectives on how narrative has been employed in the study of art which serve to illustrate Lamarque's point about disciplinary appropriateness. This is necessary before moving on to examine literature that

Routledge. In this Cobley uses references to psychologists, linguists, and anthropologists to present this view of a biological substrate for narrative. Noam Chomsky and Jerome Bruner are among those he cites.

expands the discussion of narrative by drawing from disciplinary interests that converge around social art and social science, and not usually regarded as cognate to art school education.

2.4 The existing theorisation of narrative in art

While Elkins has emphasised the narrative vacuum in contemporary art practice it is important also to recognise there is an established tradition of employing narrative with respect to certain genres of art. These discourses, which are primarily grounded in art history, certainly do have the potential to be applied to contemporary art. On the surface however, it would appear such applications would be constrained to works that follow a tradition of pictorial narrative. Nevertheless, within the last two decades there has been some influence of cognitive narratology on art history analyses which can help support a wider application of narrative to contemporary art. This section summarises existing views on narrative as they are expressed within the domain of art history with a view to opening the ground for other approaches more applicable to contemporary art and design. It continues a move made in the previous section by emphasising a narrative perspective that is based on cognitive strategies used in interpretation and organising experience. Some sense of Bruner's psychological perspective, or Herman's cognitive narratological perspective, can be traced in recent analyses by those such as Wendy Steiner, Werner Wolf and Bence Nanay whose work is included for discussion here.

2.4.1 Conflicting language in the (under) theorisation of narrative in art

Wendy Steiner appears to concur with the view previously expressed by Elkins (in relation to contemporary art) and reinforced by Bal (regarding narratology generally) about the under-theorisation of narrative. In Steiner's view the extent of the theorisation of the novel and narrativity has no comparative analogue in the visual arts:

But no similar body of theorization is available in the visual arts. In fact, the narrativity of pictures is virtually a non-topic for art historians⁸. Not only is it poorly understood, but the pictures supposedly governed by it are out of fashion. The last association one would have with modern art is the adjective "narrative," and in the formalist criticism of recent years the term has had a distinctively negative value⁹. (Steiner, 1988, p.8)

Steiner notes that even in instances where narrative is marked for attention it can be seen as something that reduces the viewing experience. For instance, note 9, at the end of the previous quotation is a reference to John Canaday's 1956 account of Turner's *The Slave Ship*. In this, Canaday criticises how the painting 'clings' to literary associations, and how a figure in the painting, possibly washed overboard and apparently being devoured by fish, is an unnecessary 'bit of storytelling' that reduces the painting's 'grandeur' (p.190). In this way there is some evidence of a tradition of treating narrative as uninteresting, inappropriate, or even destructive, to the experience of visual art. Compounding the issue, there is also the case that when narrative is imported to the analysis of art the emphasis tends to be focussed on quite a narrow set of criteria that are used to define narrative universally. While Lamarque is of the view that in the popular period of structuralism it seemed narrative structure was given more importance than any other aspect of narrative (p. 395), it appears that with respect to the studies of narrative in visual art, this

continues to be the case. Before discussion of any potential benefit of theorising narrative in visual art, there is always first the need to qualify why it is that visual art media can carry stories.

It is arguable whether this produces serious problems for time-based media such as film, but it is almost universally problematic in discussions of pictorial media. While Seymour Chatman is recognised as having successfully translated structuralist criteria such as *double time*³⁵ through the binary concepts of story/discourse (Chatman, 1978), fabula/sjužet (Shklovsky, 1926), récit/narration (Barthes, 1977 (1966)), histoire/discours (Todorov, [1966] 1980), the translation to film is uncontroversial in its adaptation in narratological discourse. As an example, three years prior to the publication of Chatman's project Laura Mulvey published 'Visual Pleasure in Cinematic Narrative' (Mulvey, [1975] 2000) dealing with the impact of the male gaze on the cinema spectator. There is no requirement in Mulvey's essay to defend the appropriateness of cinema for inclusion within narrative scholarship. The paper implicitly addresses the concept of point-of-view and cinematic narration without ever having to justify its belonging to narratology.

³⁵ Double time refers to a structuralist concept whereby time can be regarded as diegetic (internal to the world described in a text, film, or other medium; that is, story-time) or extra-diegetic (to do with the duration of the telling or showing of a story; that is discourse-time). Story-time and discourse-time are critical concepts to structuralism. If Cinderella can be regarded as a story, then some theory is required to understand how the Cinderella story can be told across a range of media. Today the renewed interest in structuralism is driven as a research referred to as transmediality which in part seeks to determine what aspects of a story, or our experience of it, change when different versions of it are available across media. It worth noting that the concept of core story with possible story 'versions' is not universally agreed and Barbara Herrnstein Smith argues a contrary view in SMITH, B. H. 1980. Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories. *Critical Inquiry*, 7, 213-236.

Mulvey's essay is well established in the literature on narrative now taking its place among the canon which includes Genette, Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Derrida, Lyotard, Jameson, Metz, Berger, Iser, Ricœur, Said and many others (McQuillan, 2000). It is simply assumed that cinematic language shares common features with literary narrative through rhetorical concepts, such as focalisation and narration. When one looks through the canon of narrative texts it is clear that much of this, again reiterating Lamarque's point, is interesting in the perspective it brings to the disciplinary interests of literary fiction, culture, society, politics (feminism in Mulvey's case), history, or the human mind, and not necessarily about the mechanics employed to choreograph content into things we can refer to as stories.

The narrative canon is loaded with examples of scholars whose work is essentially about other things besides narrative devices. Listed above is Edward Said, whose work in comparative literature is important because it is about race rather than narrative? The racial stereotyping of the Asian and Arabic world is facilitated through a multimodal lens he referred to as *orientalism* (Said, 1978). Narrative, as Said addressed it in *orientalism*, is multimodal since a consistent account of the East is co-opted through generations of cultural artefacts. These included visual artworks (particularly 19th century French works); American, British, and French literature; and later 20th century print media, film and TV. The narrative of the East is something that emerges when it is seen across these media how consistently negative the portrayal of Asian and Middle-Eastern populations appear. As a scholar of comparative literature Said's focus on visual art is limited but cites revered painters such as Eugène Delacroix (*The Death of Sardanapalus*,

1828), J. A. D. Ingres (*The Turkish Bath*, c.1862-3), and Jean-Léon Gérôme (*The Snake Charmer*, c.1879) as examples of how orientalism is carried by highly valued western artworks (Jhally, 1998). From Said there is no explicit naming of visual art as narrative in its own right, and therefore no requirement to defend it as such. Yet, if the content of these great works concurs with likewise images of the orient portrayed in literature elsewhere, then the narrative of interest has really little to do with the properties of painting and more about a cultural vision (a nineteenth century French colonial vision in this case) that is in circulation in society. The works of art contribute to narrating that vision when seen in the broader context of orientalism.

Said's view that visual art subscribes to constructing culture narratives is one that is generally seen within art history generally. The fact that images may or may not have the intrinsic properties to tell a story in themselves does not appear to be all that interesting; and what it is the images referenced by Said tell us about society's attitude towards the East is really at the centre of their narrative value. If we choose to discuss narrative in art, either past or contemporary art, then the properties of individual media should be just one of the opportunities available to us for discussion. This is something that will be later reflected in the narrative framework. Relying on intrinsic narrative properties of art objects, such as the frozen pregnant moment, double time, or the affordance an object has for causal connections, as a way of delimiting narrative from non-narrative artefacts, is implicit in Bal's criticism but it has not been a requirement, as we will see, in the traditional theorisation of narrative in art history.

Steiner has observed, the term narrative in art history has been focused on selective works from particular genres or periods, but notes these seem least fitting to comply with the kinds of requirements marked out to identify narrative as a specific kind of discourse in literature.

[...] it is ironic that the institutionalization of pictorial realism in the Renaissance made pictorial narrative as we have defined it an impossibility. In a painting with vanishing-point perspective and chiaroscuro, the assumption is that we are observing a scene through a frame from a fixed vantage point at one moment in time. Nothing could be more foreign to Renaissance realism than the juxtaposing of temporally distinct events within a single visual field, as is commonly found in ancient and medieval art. Thus, though narrative was inextricably connected with realism, paradoxically the strict adherence to the norms of Renaissance realism precluded narrativity from the visual arts. (Steiner, 1988, p.23)

The focus placed on the frozen moment in time as a convention in western painting from the Renaissance to early Modernism has been a particular stumbling block for the qualification of visual art as narrative. As a problem it sheds some light on how the discussion of narrative in art can become so narrowly focused on properties of the media that other factors pertinent to narrative get lost. What is interesting is that while the problem of whether particular visual media can, or cannot, facilitate narrative is often levelled at the affordances of the media in question (in Steiner's case painting), the rationale for the evaluation offered by historians tends to be located in the interpretative strategies, and culturally conventional readings, applied to the works. If properties of artworks, captured in Steiner's choice category of Renaissance realist painting, precluded narrativity then their presence in narrative discourse must be to do with what it is that is said

about them. This is essentially a shift in position from focussing on *form*, which is afforded by certain media and materials, to *content* which is really to do with what the work is perceived to be about.

2.4.2 Three approaches to naming art as narrative.

If it is possible to say that the art historian's perspective on narrative is defined by the conventions of interpretation in the field, then it may be possible to move towards a similar view for the contemporary practitioner and one that favours importing other reference to fields not previously regarded as relevant. It is worthwhile therefore to look at how narrative in art has traditionally been considered. To do this here three pieces of literature on narrative art are used to illustrate some of the approaches taken to naming art as narrative.

The first is Steiner's, *Pictures of Romance* (1988b), as it remains one of the most important texts on the subject. The book addresses the idea of narrativity directly in relation to visual art, and consciously links her treatise to the scholarship in narratology. It is also interesting that the book was published in 1988 at a time when the cognitive theories of narrative were beginning to circulate more broadly. Also, Steiner continues to be cited within contemporary narratology and has been published in various forms notably in 'Narrative Across Media' (Ryan, 2004a) edited by Marie-Laure Ryan, who had been contributing to semantic, cognitive and transmedial oriented studies in narrative since the late 1970s (1979, 1991, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b, 2014).

A second text referred to is the 'Artist as Narrator' catalogue published by Oklahoma City Museum of Art (Hill et al., 2005) which accompanied the exhibition of the same title, a display of nineteenth century narrative artworks from England and France. The views expressed in the catalogue are without exception isolated from narratology and it is therefore an example case showing how narrative can be assimilated into the language around painting without any requirement to justify it with reference to narratology.

Finally, a paper entitled 'Narrative Pictures' by Bence Nanay (2009) provides the opportunity to show how cognitive approaches to narrative have been adapted to the analysis of visual art. Nanay's text is important here in that it operates within established art history methods but shows the impact of cognitive narratology within the last decade and a half. Other papers, for instance by Werner Wolf (2003b) and Michael Ranta (2013), also make arguments supported by cognitive theories such as 'natural' narratology (Fludernik, 1996). Nanay's piece however, is situated in a special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, edited by Noël Carroll, illustrating the continued prevalence of formal narrative definitions in academic literature directly contemporary to Nanay's paper. In addition, his argument is assisted by citations of relevant approaches to 'narrative experience' which are useful to aspects of the proposed narrative framework discussed later in the thesis.

To deal with Steiner's approach two key issues can be seen at play: one relates to the formal attributes of paintings, their composition and visual structure of their presentation; and the second is to do with content and the suitability of the subject

matter represented in paintings for narrative interpretation. In the first instance, Steiner looks at painting in the context of how the conventions of visual art, both in its production and reception, changed in response to technological advances and shifting knowledge brought about by the Renaissance. Secondly, she deals with particular genres of art and categorises them in accordance to definitions of narrative offered by those such as Gerald Prince, an important and leading figure in shaping narratology over the past four decades.

The first issue is essentially set against the critical problem in pictorial narrative of how images can represent the progression of time; and in a structuralist narratological conception of time, this means double time. Steiner's review of pictorial narrative samples works from the quattrocento leading up to the impact of single point perspective which used various devices to signal multiple events occurring in time. *The meeting of St. Paul and St. Anthony* by Sassetta (c. 1440) provides a good example, whereby one character is represented in multiple locations in the painting along a path which winds down through the composition from the top left to the bottom right hand corner of the frame. This technique of line and repetition discussed elsewhere, notably by Nelson Goodman ([1980] 1981), which constitutes some grounds for arguing that double time is in fact a narratological feature identifiable in still pictures. This argument can be countered of course by saying this is not how people perceive still images, and it is more accurate to say people apprehend all aspects of an image in a single moment. Steiner makes the point however that this is not always the case and frescos are one example of how images sometimes, because of their scale, cannot be

apprehended in a moment. Other arguments in favour of the operation of discourse-time in painting, include propositions such as works may be arranged within architectural space. The stations of the cross in Christian churches are an easy example. Diptych and triptych works designed to fit architectural spaces such as altar pieces are also segmented in a way so the viewing process can be regarded as phased. Another can be seen in the way architecture was introduced into paintings to break up the space into different *stanzas*, thereby providing another technique for encouraging a segmented and serialised reading. Examples provided by Steiner of this technique include *The Dance of Salome* and *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist* (Gozzoli, 1461-62).

However, an issue pointed out by Steiner is that later works from the High-Renaissance forward, which became the prototype example of pictorial narrative in art history, disposed of these techniques. These works, adhering to a single-point perspective, induced by the development of optical technologies and the influence of the Albertian model (Alberti, 1956), have none of the features that are generally required as a precondition for narrative media. The monophase techniques and chiaroscuro of Caravaggio, to historically dramatic scenes of revolution in the works of Jacques-Louis David, as well as the romantic and realistic subject matter in the work of artists illustrated in *Artist as Narrator* catalogue, all operate in the single photographic or pregnant moment. This contradiction continues to inspire writings which either deny or make the case for single images as tellers of ‘a story proper’ (Speidel, 2013, p.7). These tend to be focused around definitions of

narrative, some of which I have already mentioned and which, as I have discussed, hold limited value outside the discipline in which they were constructed³⁶.

Steiner's second issue is to do with the suitability of the content in a painting to be regarded as sufficiently significant for retelling. In fact, Steiner's observation about the labelling of post Renaissance art as narrative art has a much looser qualification in that the images themselves, independent of whether they embody the necessary and sufficient conditions required by theorists such as Gerald Prince or Noël Carroll, should comply with certain expectations of what is worthy enough to be a narrative. Here Steiner makes a distinction between pictorial narrative and genre paintings. She illustrates the works *Derby Day* by W.P. Frith and *Work* by Ford Madox Brown to assist her argument.

Genre paintings explicitly present themselves as ordinary, plain, humdrum, everyday, and run-of-the-mill, and though the insistence that we attend to the unremarkable might itself be seen as a paradoxical or witty statement - perhaps the only piece of wit proper to naturalism – nevertheless one would hardly respond to such works as narratively compelling. Indeed they appear to be exactly the opposite to what we would take narrative to be. (Steiner, 1988b, p.11)

Narrative therefore can be present in monophasic works, those that make use of a pregnant moment as long as they present content that is deemed *suitably significant*. While Steiner here is separating pictorial narrative as a class of works

³⁶ See section 2.3.2 *The importance of disciplinary contexts* earlier in this chapter to see the ineffectiveness of comparing definitions from different disciplines.

from genre paintings, these classes overlap with each other historically and the distinction may not be widely agreeable.

Steiner's approach can be contrasted with the art historians, Carolyn Hill, Christopher Wood, Gabriel P. Weisberg, Susan P. Casteras, and Hardy George, who contributed to the *Artist as Narrator* catalogue, and have a different perspective on genre painting as narrative. The catalogue represents work from the Romantic and Realist traditions prominent in the nineteenth century. Artists included in the Oklahoma exhibition and discussed in the catalogue are those such as John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Frederic Leighton, William Powell Frith, Thomas Faed, Jean-François Millet, Julien Dupré, Gustav Moreau, Honoré Daumier, among others. The works discussed are without exception, what Werner Wolf refers to as, monophase paintings³⁷ (2003b, p.190), which use single-point perspective, are representational, figurative, and show scenes generally understood to be capturing a moment in time. While narrative is presumably central to the rationale for bringing these works together into a single exhibition, there is no reference to narrative theory in either the body of the four articles in the catalogue

³⁷ For the purpose of demonstrating narrativity in visual art Wolf referred to images in three categories: *series*, *multiphase* images, and *monophase* images. According to Wolf, individual images set out in series acquire narrativity by being able to offset related events in time. The stations of the cross would be an example. Multiphase allow for multiple events appear within a single frame. Hans Memling's *Life of Christ* shows Christ in different places in the painting which illustrate the various stages of his capture, trial, crucifixion and ascension. This technique was a tradition in pre-Renaissance painting. Monophase images are typically single-point perspective images characterised as capturing a significant moment and typical in historical western painting from the Renaissance. See WOLF, W. 2003a. Narrative and narrativity: A narratological reconceptualization and its applicability to the visual arts. *Word & Image*, 19, 180-197.

or in any of their citations. In only one of the essays is there any account given to the potential importance of narrative.

Throughout the nineteenth century, artists in Europe and the United States valued the importance of narrative as a way of engendering ideas and using visual imagery to educate the masses. Since many of the paintings created were in effect texts that could be read like fait divers or short stories, the fact that artists often used literary resources – stories, sayings, epigrams, plays, poems – in their conception demonstrates the power of images to affect society. Not all images were exact duplications of specific stories but visual artists could not remain indifferent to the suggestive power of words. In addition to the influence of the press and of novelists, painters responded to the art critics' call to celebrate the people of France with images that portrayed all their activities. However, pictures and texts could not explain everything, even though viewers at the Salons were made aware of conditions that affected them and others around them. In the end, the aim may have been to provide lessons for the establishment of a utopian world that existed ideally in paint or in prints and perhaps, in the future, could mould the real world. (Weisberg, 2005, p.51)

The images in the catalogue are arguably problematic from the perspective of those who hold narrative media to have certain affordances: such as an ability to show temporal progression, or to precisely narrate specific causal relationships between events or actions in a story. However, they are also problematic in the sense Steiner has used to distinguish genre from pictorial narrative paintings. Many of the images in the catalogue represent everyday urban scenes, or a nostalgic view of rural life, at a time of heavy migration to cities under the pressure of industrial development and changes to local and foreign trade. The cover image of the catalogue is presumably selected as a fitting example of the concept of narrative art that the curator of the exhibition, and the authors of the catalogue, had in mind.

It is a painting by Thomas Faed, entitled *Homeless* (1869), which represents a young dickensian-like boy sleeping upright on the side of the street with a broom in hand. Surely this scene would be regarded as ‘ordinary, plain, humdrum, everyday, [or] run-of-the-mill’ (Steiner, 1988b, p.11) in a British or French city in 1869 and hardly reportable in accordance with Steiner’s account. Many of the other works in the catalogue that seem to fit the genre category that Steiner describes, so why the narrative label? Carolyn Hill in her introduction to the catalogue apparently provides the answer:

While nineteenth-century English painting portrays more casual and intimate subjects, and French painting is more formal and at times has more dramatic forms of expression, both turned to literature, past and present, as a source of inspiration for new ideas and subject matter. (Hill et al., 2005, p.5)

Weisberg and Hill appear to be saying in the statements above is that Faed’s sleeping boy is not just any boy but one we might expect to read about in *Oliver Twist*; and paintings by virtue of their association with fiction, themselves become visual versions of existing stories³⁸. It seems that the criteria used by art historians to refer to artists as narrators is compressed in an explanation that they are simply retelling stories that are already available in the world; ideally stories given to us previously through esteemed literary art.

³⁸ This may not be entirely the case as Weisberg (Hill et al., 2005, p.51) also insinuates that the experience of the paintings in the Salon exhibits occurred in a context of conversations and social exchange which enabled any literary associations to be discussed and understood. In this sense the primacy of language, previously mentioned and regarded as critical by Marie-Laure Ryan (2014), is arguably available through indirect fictional discourse (the themes from novels, or other literature, associated with the pictorial content of the paintings on view), and through conversational or didactic discourse associated with the context of viewing in the public exhibitions of the nineteenth century.

Where a pre-existing story is extrinsic to an artwork, but referenced by it, is an argument which can be applied to many of the examples discussed by Steiner. Where visual artworks are representations or depictions of passages adapted from the Bible, for instance, they can be understood as enabling viewers to gain access to *the story* through pictorial content. While the word 'telling' is an inappropriate verb to describe what artworks do, it is still possible to see how temporal or causal properties not intrinsic to images *per se* could still be available when we engage with paintings. There is a perceptible shift here from focussing on the intrinsic properties of an artefact to a cognitive, and emotional, domain associated with human interaction with artworks. How it is we experience narrative as we engage with art is a pivotal point which Bence Nanay explores. This differentiation between intrinsic narrative properties of works and interpretative strategies, or experiential frames, is expanded later as these related to important categories in the narrative framework.

Nanay's article *Narrative Pictures* (2009) was published in a special issue of the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* in 2009 which was entirely dedicated to narrative. The rationale for the publication, and its timing, was given by the editor, Noël Carroll, as resulting from the increased interest in narrative from within philosophy partially as a response to the more general use of the term in mainstream media such as political discourse and journalism. As with narratology in generally, Carroll recognises visual art as receiving 'scant attention as narratives' in philosophy (Carroll, 2009a, p.3) and it is within this context that the two essays on visual media are introduced in the special issue. The title of the two

essays are: *Narrative in Comics* (Pratt, 2009) and *Narrative Pictures* (Nanay, 2009).

Nanay makes a distinction between what he calls his 'experiential position' and existing influential accounts of narrative in the philosophy of art. As examples of influential accounts he references work by Carroll (2001b), Gregory Currie (2006), and David Velleman (2003). While the paper is presented within the philosophy of art it follows the narratological objective of serving a 'general account of narrative' which 'needs to be able to cover both pictorial and literary cases' (p.119). His approach is to focus on our 'engagement' with narrative rather than explicit properties of works.

My claim is that it is a crucial (maybe even necessary and sufficient) feature of our engagement with narrative pictures that an action of one of the characters in the picture is part of what we are (supposed to be) aware of when looking at the picture." (p.124)

Nanay's paper is an interesting bridge between the philosophy of art and narratology in the sense that he picks up on Wendy Steiner's irony, without explicitly referencing her, in relation to post-Renaissance paintings using single-point perspective. Although he, interestingly, has a different position from her with respect to genre paintings:

Genre paintings are traditionally considered by art historians to be a subcategory of narrative paintings. Still, they usually represent only one event or state of affairs. Although this argument is very straightforward, it can also be countered by simply biting the bullet: art historians are just wrong in characterizing genre paintings as narrative pictures. (p.120)

While recognising the irony he is clearly not in favour of branding a sizable portion of art historians as simply misguided in terms of their use of narrative. So, while he recognises that the prototype examples of pictorial narrative do not have the intrinsic affordances to serve narrative in a way that would suit narratology's general account his position can be seen somewhat as a defence of the attitude, if not the logical position, we witness in catalogues such as the *Artist as Narrator*. While he does not go to the point where he would describe the painter as a narrator his emphasis shifts away from the artefact towards the perception of the viewer and what the viewer is supposed to be aware of when engaging with images. This invokes a cognitive narratological argument without explicitly naming it.

In establishing his experiential account Nanay essentially translates the discussion away from works to viewers. Initially he throws a line to Edward Branigan³⁹ to point his argument at human experience rather than the categorisation of texts as narratives (2009, p.120). He also narrows in on his concern for 'events' drawing on David Velleman's characterisation of engagement with narrative being a certain kind of 'emotional cadence' (2003, p. 120). According to Velleman this emotional cadence is initiated in the work by the artist/author and is completed by the reading audience; for example, when an immoral act is followed with a just reward (2003, p. 6). This pairing has a pattern in narrative theory and Barthes' description of 'functions', derived from Tomachevski, seem to provide the logical semiotic property which enable such cadences to be realised: 'the purchase of a revolver

³⁹ Edward Branigan is recognised for bringing a cognitive dimension to the study of narrative in film which is described in BRANIGAN, E. 1992. *Narrative comprehension and film*, London ; New York, Routledge.

has for a correlate the moment when it will be used' (Barthes, 1977, p.92). Gregory Currie gives the example of a similar narrative device in the Aristotelian story *The Murder of Mitys* (2006, pp.309-10). In the story of Mitys, the death of the villain by a falling statue of the rightful King Mitys is in reality unconnected with the villain's murder of Mitys. Yet, these are experienced as causally related, that is, a form of poetic justice constructed by the reader. Frank Kermode's 'tick-tock' metaphor is also referenced by Velleman to show how a seed sewn in a text (tick) sets an anticipation of what is to come (2003, p. 11). When the expectation is later served in the text (tock) the sense of a closure is experienced by the reader. This also points to a process always at play in reading, which is the activity of making sense of the current situation provided in the text by anticipating a potential ending. There is therefore a set of possibilities always at play, some more probable than others, when a text primes the reader with opportunities for projecting meanings or conclusions⁴⁰. Nanay therefore has plenty of existing intellectual territory on which to build a case which is set around what it is we are 'supposed to be aware of' (2009, p.124) when engaging with images. It is interesting however that he makes no reference to Wolf's account of narrativity (Wolf, 2003b) which is built on the work of Gerald Prince and Monika Fludernik's experiential account (Fludernik, 1996). Despite the orientation of his essay towards a cognitive theory

⁴⁰ Gapping is a term used to describe strategies where a text is deliberately left ambiguous, or information is withheld, to allow the reader to participate in projecting meanings by mobilising social and cultural knowledge to complete patterns inscribed a work. See the entry on Gapping pp.193-194 in HERMAN, D., JAHN, M. & RYAN, M.-L. 2005. *Routledge encyclopedia of narrative theory*, London ; New York, Routledge.

of narrative it is surprising he does not make reference to any literature in the field of cognitive narratology.

Nanay introduces his case using two strategies. First, he separates the concepts of 'representation' and 'depiction' and then goes on to interrogate 'action'. His point about representation is that if, in a general account of narrative, more than one event must be represented in order for a discourse to qualify as a narrative, then a straightforward conclusion is that most genre paintings, which typically represent just one event, are non-narrative artefacts. However, a wider problem outside of art history is how an image could ever represent a narrative if a series of events is required. We have seen from the essays in the *Artist as Narrator* catalogue how some art historians will resolve this, and some explanation is provided in Wolf's account. Instead Nanay calls into question the distinction between representation and depiction: 'how do pictures represent those events that they do not depict' (p.121). And, if they are not available visually in the image, then how do we become aware of them? Nanay gives one example through Jacques Louis David's *Consecration of the Emperor Napoleon I and Coronation of Empress Josephine in the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris on 2 December 1804* (1808). A well-informed spectator will be aware that the event depicted is causally connected to other events in history. The picture also captures something of the atmosphere and activities of the cathedral, the murmurs of the crowd, the walk up the aisle, the placing of the crown on the head. These, in fact, are not depicted but clearly imagined or accessible in the viewers understanding of such a ceremony.

According to Nanay's argument we can assume the placing of the crown on Napoleon's head in fact is not depicted but clearly available as an action in the painting. If we are aware of the nature of an event (a coronation in this case) and we know that these events involve actions, such as crowns being placed on heads, it seems pedantic then to call on the 'precision of natural language' as a necessary requirement to clarify that this is what is happening. Therefore, multiple events or actions can be recovered from the experience of viewing a picture, even though they may not be depicted.

Nanay's argument, as an experiential account, is made within the context of the philosophy of art so it is understandable that his arguments are held up with references to the field. But how useful is compositional interpretation in art alone in providing us with knowledge about human experience of narrative action? If one follows the argument down its natural path it would surely be important to interrogate action itself. David Herman, one of the leading academics of contemporary cognitive narratology, has shown in *Story Logic* (2002) that the correlation of action theory with narrative theory is a complex affair. In a section of the book entitled *Narrative Microdesigns* Herman pulls apart the concepts of states, events, and actions as they relate to narrative theory and demonstrates various taxonomies that can be drafted in to interrogate and classify action⁴¹.

⁴¹ In Chapter 2 *Action Representations* Herman draws heavily of the theoretical work of Georg Henrik Von Wright and Arthur Danto in drafting a taxonomy of 'action specification' in narrative. In a subsection entitled *Parameters of Action* he explains the specification of action as a set of parameters that range from 'fully specified' to 'fully open'. In Table 5 he lists six categories (FO = fully open; PO = predominantly open; MO = moderately open; MS = moderately specified; PS = predominantly specified; FS = fully specified). He describes these in some detail and provides a typology of preference rankings for action representations in narrative which he gives example by reference to

Nanay's viewpoint is useful in its perspective on narrative properties and how these are identified relative to the experience of the work as opposed to being physically identifiable in the work itself. He therefore provides support for an alternative way of considering monophase images to be narrative works without having to revert to pre-existing well-known stories which paintings retell, or more to the point, show.

From the perspective of my argument Nanay is helpful in the sense that his position supports an understanding of how contemporary artists might call not on great literary works as the narrative prototype for their art, as Hill et al. (2005) have done, but instead on cognitive narrative strategies used by viewers interpreting artworks. If a narrative mode of thinking operates in the interpretation of unfamiliar paintings by allowing for non-depicted events to be available through what viewers imagine, then there is no reason this cannot be transferred to modernist or contemporary works. While Nanay uses well-known neoclassical works to make his point he also drafts in photographic works such as Henri Cartier-Bresson's *Behind Saint-Lazare Station* (Nanay, 2009, p.121). In this image what is depicted is a man jumping over a puddle. From what is shown it seems inevitable he will land in the puddle. According to Nanay, while the event of landing in the puddle is not depicted, it is clearly available to the viewer. Cartier-Bresson's figure captured in this split-second image is not like Thomas Faed's homeless dickensian

genres. The 'gappiness' between action representations varies in these categories and would appear to provide valuable support to Nanay's case for actions we should be aware of when looking at paintings. Herman's typology of preference rankings for action is something I adapt later in Chapter 5 to help describe an aspect the narrative framework.

boy on the cover of the *Artist as Narrator*. Cartier-Bresson's jumping man instead is an anonymous citizen of 1930s Paris and, if we accept Nanay's argument, his story is an everyday one largely constructed by the participating viewers in a way that would be explained in part by Bruner's narrative mode, or folk psychology.

When one takes the position that the experience of pictures can be a narrative experience, as it is proposed by Nanay, is it not then incumbent on the critic to admit that the approaches traditionally applied in art history and criticism require support from other disciplines such as cognitive narratology or psychology. To successfully expand the experiential perspective, it would appear that a deeper focus on related cognitive narrative theory is important. Since work has already been done on modifying it for the analysis of narrative in other media, as is the case in Herman's work (2002, 2003, 2004, 2010), then surely this should be employed to support a related argument in the visual arts.

2.5 Extending the ground for the consideration of narrative in practice:

aesthetics, social aesthetics, and small stories

In extending the theoretical ground to make narrative sensible to the contemporary creative practitioner it is necessary to be conscious and critical of the views as they have been expressed above. The observation that narrative is dead or absent in the mind of contemporary artists may be true to some extent; but there is conflicting evidence to suggest it has been abandoned by practitioners as opposed to critics writing about their work. While analysis of narrative in pictorial media clearly does exist in the literature, it is only relevant in approaches taken by artists and designers employing techniques that correspond to a tradition of pictorial narrative in

painting. Even in those cases it might be true to say that those approaches are largely under-theorised. That is, when one examines the way the term narrative is employed in cognate fields to studio based practices, such as the history of art, the evidence follows from what Lamarque has identified. The disciplinary context as opposed to any formal definition appears to be the overriding factor in determining how narrative is understood to be at work. Implicit from that laid out so far is that *narrativist turn*, which captures multiple approaches to narrative in the humanities, has yet to visit the articulation of ideas that support practice-based arts in any way that could be described as rigorous.

The difference in recent years involves the emergence of the PhD in art and design practice. This presents a new context for the generation of scholarship that supports practice-based art which previously has not existed. While others will continue to review and interpret artworks from the perspective of their own disciplines such as art history, art criticism, or aesthetics, the emergence of the PhD in art and design practice has established a formal context for the practitioner to speak in defence of their own work. Since their disciplinary context is art practice it is important then to establish some way narrative can be spoken about from a practice-centred viewpoint. The overwhelming emphasis to date has been placed on artistic outputs – paintings, architecture, photographs, graphic novels, and the like. A practitioner-centred approach on the other hand may expose a narrative sensitivity that corresponds to a working methodology in addition to artefacts that are the output of that process.

If narrative is a basic mode of human thought, and art a significant human activity, it seems irrational then to consider narrative in contemporary practice ‘a dead issue’. If it can be said, there is operating in the world what can be regarded as a creative human mind, then surely narrative must be present, somewhere nearby, in some form or other.

2.5.1 The evolution in practice

In extending the ground for a broader understanding of narrative in art and design it is important to note the evolution in practice itself. In recent decades there have been significant changes promoted by the digitisation of creative tools. Electronic tools have been part of studio practices enough time now to warrant an historical review. Oliver Grau's *Media Art Histories* (2007), Catherine Mason's *A Computer in the Art Room* (2008) and Edward E. Shanken's *Art and electronic media* (2009) are examples summarising this history in single volumes at the end of the 2000s. Since the 1960s innovative artworks have been produced under the activities of Experiments in Art and Technology (EAT), and demonstrated in exhibitions such as *Cybernetic Serendipity* (1968). These were manifestations of experimental electronic artwork at a time when this was difficult to achieve. Overlapping interests between artists and engineers produced some striking projects at the time⁴². While collaboration continues to be an important feature of contemporary

⁴² For example, Gordon Pask exhibited work in seminal electronic art exhibition *Cybernetic Serendipity* at the ICA in London in 1968; Edward Ihnatowicz's work *SAM* was completed in collaboration with engineers from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at University College, London. See pp.79-99 MASON, C. 2008. *A Computer in the Art Room*, Norfolk, JIG Publishing. Also Robert Rauschenberg collaborated with Billy Klüver of Bell Labs in creating a series of interactive performances works under the

electronic projects a contrast can be made with the way technologies have evolved today allowing accessibility for the non-technical or non-expert users. Opensource technologies and tools such as Wiring, Arduino and Processing have promoted a generation of interfaces that creative practitioners have used to express ideas and develop interactive or data-driven works⁴³. While electronic art will undoubtedly continue to be of interest because it is recent technology being applied by artists and designers, increasingly digital technologies are simply the materials artists use in their practice. Coupled with the fact that young emerging artists have grown up surrounded by digital technology it is not unforeseeable that future work will increasingly feature behaviours designed to respond to human or environmental inputs. Equally it is clear such works will be appreciated not only for their application of modern technology but because they are perceived as engaging socially with their audience. In this regard contemporary commentators, such as Claire Bishop and Grant H. Kester remind us, any art engaging with society and the people in it - and increasingly this engagement is mediated through digital

title 9 *Evenings: Theatre & Engineering*,. See account by Klüver: <https://web.archive.org/web/20120305133804/http://www.9evenings.org/openscore.php>

⁴³ Arduino developed out of the Wiring project which was developed by Hernando Barragán as part of a Masters research programme at the Interaction Design Institute Ivrea in Italy in 2004. Arduino was released in 2005 and was served by a programming interface called Processing. This interactive media software was developed by Ben Fry, a graduate of MIT Boston, and Casey Reas of UCLA and won a Golden Nica from the Prix Ars Electronica in 2005. Since then the Arduino hardware has been widely used with Processing on design projects that facilitate real-time interactions with the physical world. A spectrum of example projects are viewable at <https://processing.org/exhibition/>

Arduino today offers a range of electronic kits, modules, and prototyping shields that are accessible design tools for artists and designers. Arduino is similar to the Raspberry Pi and the Intel Galileo

technology - demands a methodology that is on some grounds sociological⁴⁴. The possibility of the audience to interact with a work opens opportunities for importing narrative approaches concerned with human social factors typically not found in the study or analysis of art and design. By framing the human response invoked by an artistic work as an aesthetic goal of the work we can move towards some sense of what is meant here in my application of the term *social aesthetics*.

While social science has traditionally distinguished between anthropology and sociology, throughout the twentieth century there has been some convergence of these fields. A defining feature of anthropology's focus has been on *other* societies, typically far-away and often regarded as primitive. Methodologies in anthropology weigh in on qualitative approaches seeking knowledge through interpretations based on history and ethnographic techniques, such as observing tribal customs in action. Sociology on the other hand has been traditionally differentiated by its emphasis on contemporary societies with respect to their organisation and structure. While sociology's subject is society's individuals, communities and institutions, its methods have traditionally been based on quantitative techniques marking it as a *hard science* comparative to anthropology. The social anthropologist in modern social science may combine methodologies from anthropology and sociology by employing ethnography in institutional settings and

⁴⁴ Claire Bishop provides a detailed account of participative practices in art which demonstrate the material basis for her call for a perspective on art that is sociological. See BISHOP, C. 2012. *Artificial hells : participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*, London ; New York, Verso Books. Grant. H Kester has also focused on social participation and social interaction as factors defining his concept of *dialogic aesthetics* which he describes in KESTER, G. H. 2004. *Conversation pieces : community and communication in modern art*, Berkeley, University of California Press.

generalising about how individuals negotiate, make sense of, or adapt institutional structures (for example, procedures, processes, or facilities) to make them functional within their own personal or professional practices. Social anthropology and its methods has gained considerable traction within design⁴⁵ in an era where *human factors*⁴⁶ were increasingly recognised as critical to design. This is particularly evident in design fields such as Interaction and Experience Design (IXD), Human Computer Interaction (HCI), and design for embodied interaction⁴⁷ where interfaces have been increasingly understood to be embedded in the

⁴⁵ Lucy Suchman's ethnographic work in Parc Xerox in 1977 observing participants attempting to operate a colour copier was part of a body of experimental work that contributed to what is now widely referred to as participative design. Suchman's demonstrated how the social anthropologist's perspective on human action around unfamiliar artefacts could inform design. First published in 1982 Suchman's *Plans and Situated Actions* has been highly influential in design for embodied interaction and a second addition was available in 2007. See SUCHMAN, L. A. 2007 (1987). *Plans and situated actions : the problem of human-machine communication*, Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York, Cambridge University Press. Paul Dourish's popular work on embodied interaction uses Suchman to mark the importance of the social anthropology in interface design previously dominated by cognitive psychology. See DOURISH, P. 2001b. *Where the action is : the foundations of embodied interaction*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press. Projects are cited by Dourish include those conducted at the Royal College of Art in London.

⁴⁶ See Liam Bannon's characterisation of human engagement with technological interfaces in BANNON, L. 1992. From human factors to human actors: the role of psychology and human-computer interaction studies in system design. *Design at work: cooperative design of computer systems*. L. Erlbaum Associates Inc.

⁴⁷ Social sciences became increasingly important for design in an era where computer interfaces were recognised as moving from being propriety expert systems used by engineers out into to everyday social use. By 1990 human factors were clearly recognised as critical to design. Cognitive psychology, was increasingly augmented with social issues around design. Among others Liam Bannon, Jonathan Grudin, Donal A. Norman contributed to creating awareness of how the social world around interfaces was critically important to design. This build work in Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) and Social Computing, which identified the social space around computers as research territory relevant to interface design. Jonathan Grudin has charted this evolution of HCI from initial expert systems to interfaces designed for the collaborative social world. See GRUDIN, J. 1990. The computer reaches out: the historical continuity of interface design. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems: Empowering people*. Seattle, Washington, United States: ACM.

environment. There is also a tradition of sociality as a factor in art practice⁴⁸ which supports the treatment of electronic artworks as social entities⁴⁹. In this way electronic artworks constitute human-machine interfaces with similar interests to the design fields mentioned above particularly with respect to the value social sciences bring to their study.

Works understood from the perspective of sociality bring a different orientation to the narrative framework and that orientation is distinct from that previously discussed in relation to art history, criticism, and aesthetics. Within the context of contemporary art and design practice a social orientation serves a way of talking about narrative without having to appeal to literary theory. Instead it draws on quotidian everyday experience as the raw material of narrative in the guise of *small*

⁴⁸ It is not possible here to list all approaches that overlap sociality and art but in addition to Bishop and Kester mentioned in footnote 52 above authors such as Pablo Helguera (2011) and Tom Finkelpearl (2013) have addressed social engagement in contemporary art seeing it as continuous with work initiated by Alan Kaprow through FLUXUS in the 1960s. See FINKELPEARL, T. 2013. What we made : conversations on art and social cooperation. Durham ; London: Duke University Press. Helguera's definition of socially engaged art (SEA) has 'social intercourse' as a central criterion for its existence. Types of art practice based on social interaction in his idea are captured under relational aesthetics, community art, collaborative art, participatory art, dialogic art, and public art. He also provides a useful if 'tentative taxonomy' of participation in chapter 2 p.239/933. See HELGUERA, P. 2011. Education for Socially Engaged Art: A Materials and Techniques Handbook. Kindle ed. New York: Jorge Pinto Books Inc. Helguera recognises methods from anthropology and sociology as important to SEA see pp.120-149/933. Also, there is the work captured under the Sociological Art Collective from the early 1970s in France featuring the work of artists such as Fred Forest, Hervé Fischer and Jean-Paul Thenot. Pierre Bourdieu of course has given us a sociological perspective which confronted modernist formalist approaches that sought to isolate art from the social world BOURDIEU, P. 1987. The Historical Genesis of a Pure Aesthetic. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 46, 201-210.

⁴⁹ I have articulated this previously in a presentation to the Irish Human Computer Interaction Conference. See GREEN, P. 2010. The Artwork Reaches Out. Considerations towards a framework for social aesthetics in new media art. *Irish Human Computer Interaction Conference*. Dublin City University.

stories. This orientation towards the everyday may hold limited interest for the literary theorist or art historian but for the psychologist, cognitive therapist, anthropologist, or sociologist it is one that is profoundly important. Therefore, drawing on quotidian life as the ground for promoting narrative in contemporary art calls on social science as an academic support for narrative's significance. It also elicits the original 'narrative is everywhere' (Barthes, 1977 (1966), p.79) conception for narratology that was presented by Barthes.

In the effort to extend the narrative ground to contemporary art practice the remaining sections of this chapter will identify with a specific concept of *social aesthetics* which is connected it to the idea of *small stories*. Taken from the perspective of my practice this is later in the thesis expanded as a social category in the narrative framework. Supporting this strategy of linking small stories with social aesthetics is the work of the social anthropologist Erving Goffman. His work on the social dramaturgy and frame analysis is introduced as an example of how social science provided an academic support to my work. In this way the value of *small* or *personal* stories for the sociologist and anthropologist is shown to be one that is also valuable to the creative practitioner doing research.

2.5.2. A note on aesthetics

While the definition of the adjective form of *aesthetic* in the OED is: 'concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty', its form as a noun is given as: 'a set of principles underlying the work of a particular artist or artistic movement'. On the one hand we have the definition of aesthetic that points to properties of an object,

or world, that are referred to as 'beautiful', on the other hand we have a set of shared principles about art, but are not explicitly restricted to beauty.

Arguably the most influential of modern theories of the aesthetic is found in the German philosophical tradition of the eighteenth century, namely the *Critique of Judgement* by Immanuel Kant. In this Kant identified a 'disinterested' appreciation of beauty that is distinguishable from personal taste, which is tainted by personal interest and not possible to rationalise into a universal principle that he refers to as 'beauty' (Kant, 1790; trans. 1987, pp. 506 - 509). This rational, or contemplated, appreciation of beauty is addressed by Kant in relation to art but only in a limited way.

'It might seem surprising that the *Critique of Judgement* has been an extraordinarily influential text on art. After all, in some ways, the book is hardly about art at all. Most of Kant's examples come from nature, and aesthetic in his usage refers more to what is experienced through the senses than to something specifically artistic. (Leitch, 2001, p. 503)

It is critical for Kant that the faculties necessary to the understanding of beauty are 'universally' in the possession of all humans; who must nevertheless acquire *taste*, that is, the ability to judge well (Kant, 1790; trans. 1987). Judgments of beauty are contemplated on that apprehended through the senses and he distinguished between an object's material properties and its *form*, with the latter being the true source of aesthetic pleasure. In this way his influence in *essentialist* or *formalist* theories of art in the first half of the twentieth century⁵⁰ is understandable. But

⁵⁰ Morris Weitz outlines each of 'the great theories of art' in six categories entitled – *Formalism, Voluntarism, Emotionalism, Intellectualism, Intuitionism, and Organicism.*

Kant does not issue any restriction to specific modalities. 'Things' included in his discussion of the distinction between *agreeable*, *beautiful*, and *good* include 'canary wine', 'the sound of wind instruments', a 'building', a 'garment', and 'the concert we are listening to' (p. 510). Aesthetics, as it is articulated in Kantian terms, therefore is neither constrained to artefacts (crafted by an artisan) or indeed privileges any one modality; on the contrary it explicitly shows that gustatory, auditory, as well as visual modes are suitable channels for aesthetic experience. If there is any implicit assumption carried by the definition in the OED, or through the application of Kantian thought to specific art theories, that aesthetic principles relate to visual properties manifested in an artist's work, or artistic movement, it is not explicit in the Critique of Judgment.

In dealing with contemporary art work it is often necessary to work around expectations that linger from criticism in the modernist aesthetic tradition. The shift towards a *critical attitude* in the latter half of the twentieth century complicates the correlation between beauty with aesthetics⁵¹. Examples of work in

For a definitions of formalist See WEITZ, M. 1956. The Role of Theory in Aesthetics. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 15, 27-35. The essentialist or formalist theories of art in the first half of the twentieth century mentioned above correlate to what Weitz refers to under *Formalism* and is evidenced in the theories of Clive Bell and Roger Fry. Clement Greenberg's *pure aesthetic* would also be captured in his formalist concept.

⁵¹ Thierry de Duve's reflection on the state of the philosophy of art from a pedagogical perspective provides a useful insight to an aesthetic confusion which characterised late twentieth century art. De Duve interpreted, what he refers to as the *Bauhaus model*, as underpinning much twentieth century art philosophy, in the form of the triad of creativity-medium-invention. This emerged as a new philosophical paradigm in opposition to that of *talent-technique-imitation* of the pre-twentieth century art academies. In the second half of the twentieth century De Duve describes a move away from the *Bauhaus model* as one that entailed a 'shift from creativity to attitude' establishing a model he calls *attitude-practice-deconstruction*. This creative attitude facilitated a conceptual approach to art practice and sets a context for an understanding of social aesthetics. De Duve has

mind are from artists operating in a conceptual or activist frame such as the *Situationists International* (SI) from 1957, or performance works that are categorised under the term *Happenings* initiated by Allan Kaprow. John Cage's sound piece *4'33"* (1952) largely constitutes a performance of silence. Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965) is not about the beauty of an everyday object, but instead an invitation by the artist for us to consider the concept of a chair being available in different ways. Finding such approaches to art meaningful or engaging has little to do with a perception of beauty in any physical sense. Conceptual art instead calls on alternative aesthetic modes that appeal to a wider economic, cultural, or political sensibility which have been available through both the continental and analytic aesthetic traditions developed throughout the course of the twentieth century. It is within this context that social aesthetics can be understood.

2.5.3 Social aesthetics

The term social aesthetics also requires some clarification as it has been utilised in a range of fields such as sociology (Federici, 2005, Miyahara, 2014, Martin, 2011), ethnology (Giordano, 2010, Brenneis, 1987) and visual anthropology (MacDougall, 1999) (Cabot, 2013), and cultural studies (Highmore, 2004) as well as art related fields such as performance, activist and community-based art (Larsen, 1996, 1999, Nielsen and Mari, 2010, Gether, 2015). In art practice it has

some criticisms of this attitude from a pedagogical perspective. See DE DUVE, T. 1993, reprinted 2005. *When Form Has Become Attitude - And Beyond*. In: KOCUR, Z. & LEUNG, S. (eds.) *Theory in contemporary art since 1985*. 1st ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

been a term used to describe an integration of human resources into the appreciation of art. I made some effort at this previously (Green, 2010) where the appreciation of an artwork can be considered in terms of how it is connected to people or how it may be accessible (at a cultural level), or integrated through collaboration, activism, or community-based practices.

In a dialog between Lars Bang Larsen and Palle Nielsen, credit for coining the term in 1982 is given to Bill Olander (Gether, 2015, p.79). In practice as an artform social aesthetics, according to Larsen and Nielsen, has been evident in work in Scandinavia since the late 1960s in forms of activism, feminism and institutional critique. This view corresponds with Pablo Helguera's who saw it develop through performance art, conceptual art, ephemeral art, and relational aesthetics (Helguera, 2011) which carry ideas of participation which had a genesis in work by Alan Kaprow's *Happenings* and the work of the *Situationists*. Larsen uses projects such as *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* (1968 -2014) by Palle Nielsen and Jens Haaning's *Middelburg Summer* (1996) as manifestations of what he intends by his use of social aesthetics. Nielsen's *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* was one where a playground was installed in the Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 1968 transforming the gallery into a free space for children's play. This work was a variation on previous projects where illegal playgrounds were constructed in disadvantaged areas in Copenhagen with the cooperation of local residents and university architecture students⁵². The 1968

⁵² For a list of locations where *The Model* playground was installed see pp. 82-87 in GETHER, C. 2015. *THE MODEL: Palle Nielsen* In: GETHER, C., HØHOLT, S., RUGAARD, D. J. & JALVING, C. (eds.). Denmark: Arken Museum of Modern Art.

installation was visited by an estimated 20,000 children and could be regarded as a challenge to the elitism of the cultural institution. The project was about political activism in its method but about pedagogy and social inclusion in its content, as progressive child-centred education became heavily politicised in Scandinavia at the time. Nielsen's work can be seen to anchor the notion of social aesthetics by activating the concepts of performance, participation, interaction, activism and community building as important criteria for the socially engaged art work. For Larsen this is also evident in Haaning's *Middelburg Summer* (1996) where the artist coordinated the relocation of a Turkish clothing factory from a neighbouring town to Middelburg's Vleeshal Museum in the Netherlands. The factory remained at the museum for eight weeks where it continued its normal production. In a review by Larsen in Frieze, the project exposed the 'Western-guilty-conscience idea of the "lousy jobs we give our guest workers"' as the factory operated by its immigrant workers in direct contrast to the expectations visitors might have of an art museum in a prime address within a popular holiday town (Larsen, 1996). Among other issues, the use of social here is to do with mixing standards of host and immigrant communities where there are sharply differing expectations particularly with regard to labour and economic value. Haaning's work has been described elsewhere as addressing 'the issue of racism in Scandinavian society'⁵³ and these issues are interesting as much to the sociologist as they are to the socially engaged artist.

⁵³ Haaning's work is posted on ArtStack with a short bio which includes the inline quotation. See <https://theartstack.com/artist/jens-haaning/middelburg-summer-1996>

Pablo Helguera insists on the notion of dialogue as a critical factor in socially engaged art. In the process of providing a provisional definition of this he suggests:

While there is no complete agreement as to what constitutes a meaningful interaction or social engagement, what characterizes socially engaged art is its dependence on social intercourse as a factor of its existence. (Helguera, 2011, p.117/933)

Social intercourse is not necessarily linguistic and Haaning's work can be seen as a dialogue between two economies one (the factory with its immigrant workers) normally invisible in suburban commercial estates, the other (Vleeshal Museum) visibly promoting the status of its valuable heritage. Nevertheless, small stories and conversational dialogue can indeed be at the centre of socially aesthetic work. Grant H. Kester in *Conversation Pieces* (2004) makes dialogue a central factor in socially engaged art projects. As an example, he uses projects such as *Routes* – presented as 'an arts project in collaboration with the bus workers in Northern Ireland' (pp.6-8) - to demonstrate how the social has meaning in art by attempting to reinstate fractured or contentious communications between communities or their members. These projects act against established narratives that are motivated by wider political or commercially oriented goals. They often aim to reinstate localised narratives of human labour or, as in *Routes*, voice non-sectarian attitudes about catholic-protestant relations otherwise presented as hostile for political reasons. In these examples the use of the term social leans towards Marxist notions of *socialism* which are tied closely to socio-economic and political forces that undermine communities or marginalise particular social groups. Activism often responds to negatively impacted communities or groups and is generally motivated

by a goal of reinstating a social conscience in economic systems perceived to be unfairly balanced.

2.5.4 Micro-social aesthetics and small stories

It is important to restate that the effort set against expanding a narrative framework for art practice here emerged from my own work. Of the five orientations of the framework introduced in chapter 1 two were presented as social categories – the *ratified public domain* and the *non-ratified public domain*. It is necessary to differentiate a more specific idea of social aesthetics I have recognised through my own practice from that captured in the previous section which is much more closely to embodied interaction at the local level of face-to-face level. A refinement of the term would advance *micro*⁵⁴ as a modifier emphasising small scale, and largely inconsequential, interactions. While the term *social aesthetics* is still accurate in that it facilitates an understanding of human action as a resource to be understood

⁵⁴ The term micro here is drawn from a use in modern sociological theory. Specifically, it references George Ritzer's description of microscopic and macroscopic theories as two extremities of a theoretical spectrum in sociological theory. On one extreme there is a focus macro-social order with society impacted top-down by economic and/or cultural determinism and the other which interprets social systems as influenced bottom-up by how it is people use them. Ritzer provides Talcott Parsons' *structural functionalism* as an example of might be called a macro-theory. *Symbolic Interactionism* and *Ethnomethodology* are given as social theories focused on individuals or localised (micro) negotiations of meaning. Ritzer own theoretical position is that in modern sociological theory the emphasis on micro or macro are generally integrated. Society can be understood from the perspective of institutional policies which determine how people act, but such policies are equally the result of observing local needs or tendencies. In American sociological theory this has been called *micro-macro linkage* or *micro-macro integration* while in European scholarship it has been referred to as *agency-structure integration*. See pp. 373-420 RITZER, G. 2008. *Modern sociological theory*, New York, NY, McGraw-Hill Higher Education. In Ritzer's treatment Erving Goffman's work, which is important here, is classified as a form of symbolic interactionism dealing with the notion of the self as a dramaturgical product of one's interaction with the surrounding social environment See (Ibid, pp. 235-244).

aesthetically, *micro-social aesthetics* can be used to specifically identify the *social action* involved in people's everyday face-to-face interaction as the basic material of aesthetic interest. What it is that people do in situations, particularly those where social rules accidentally breakdown, or deliberately fail to be upheld, can provide an interesting source of human action which is the regular everyday content of small stories.

Personal narratives or *small stories* are embedded in social life and have become a popular target for analysis in the social sciences⁵⁵. Nonetheless, they are typically relegated as aesthetically unimportant in the arts comparative to the great stories of literary and cinematic art. In the work of Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps there can be found a reversal of this attitude. In the section entitled *Narrative Proclivities* in their introductory chapter of *Living Narrative* (Ochs and Capps, 2001) provide their understanding of the term personal narrative:

Personal narrative is a way of using language or another symbolic system to imbue life events with a temporal and logical order, to demystify them and

⁵⁵ Throughout the thesis there have been references to the application of narrative analysis in sociology with William Labov's being the first significant and explicit influence on social science research. See LABOV, W. 1972. *Language in the inner city; studies in the Black English vernacular*, Philadelphia,, University of Pennsylvania Press. Catherine Kohler Riessman's more recent work is also important in that it sets out an approach to analysing social research using narrative strategies. RIESSMAN, C. K. 1993. *Narrative analysis*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage Publications. Many social scientists doing narrative research today will introduce their work by referencing Labov and Riessman. Important examples are: ANDREWS, M., SQUIRE, C. & TAMBOUKOU, M. 2013. *Doing narrative research*, Los Angeles, California, SAGE. And BAMBERG, M. 2012. Narrative Analysis. In: COOPER, H. M. & AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION. (eds.) *APA handbooks in psychology*. 1st ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

establish coherence across past, present, and as of yet unrealized experience
(p.2)

Unlike the literary theorist, Ochs and Capps prefer to look at how narrative is used as part of a process of negotiating potential meanings in the world; a way of making sense of past, concurrent, or future events and actions. This insight casts narrative in terms that are more akin to a methodology, one which is applied by all of us routinely in our day to day living experience. The use of story in their terms takes on a heuristic function, one that is applied to testing the credibility of propositions explaining the meaning of unexpected or unfamiliar events. People in conversation typically propose and withdraw hypotheses evaluating the plausibility of their explanations for some event they wish to come to terms with. Ochs and Capps give the following description of narrative within conversational interaction:

conversational interaction realizes the essential function of personal narrative – to air, probe, and otherwise attempt to reconstruct and make sense of actual and possible life experiences [...] Explanatory sequences in everyday personal narratives resemble scientific hypotheses when they not only provide explanations of the lived world but are also open to challenge and revision.
(Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.7)

Their approach, which they describe as lying at the interface of linguistics, anthropology, and psychology (p.58), is one that runs in sharp relief to others that make plot structures, wired with causal connections, a dominant criterion for narrative. They are of the view that narrative scholarship has centred on perspectives that demonstrate qualities such as a 'coherent temporal progression of events that may be reordered for rhetorical purposes and that is typically located in some past time and place' or those with a 'plot line that encompasses a

beginning, a middle, and an end' (p.57). Their account in viewing narratives as 'rough works in progress' used to 'grapple with unresolved life experiences'(p.57) introduces an interesting metaphor which they attribute to the influence of archaeologist Nicholas Toth who revolutionised the understanding of Stone Age tools.

Prior to Toth's studies, the perceived perspective was that early hominoids chipped a cobble in such a way that it could be used as a pick or hand axe. Researchers considered the splintered flakes as waste products and examined them for information about techniques used to shape the stone core tool. While others were analysing the morphological shapes and cognitive correlates of the chipped cores, Toth in a radical turnabout, discovered that the flakes were the primary tools and that the large stone was an incidental by-product, possibly a secondary tool. (p.3)

To this they add:

we posit that like the stone flakes, mundane conversational narratives of personal experience constitute the prototype of narrative activity rather than the flawed by-product of more artful and planned narrative discourse' (p.3)

This view substitutes for one where narrative is found crafted in cultural artefacts, such as the novel or film. Instead it makes use of narrative as a way of exploring how people see and invest the world around them with meaning or significance. To interpret such a view of narrative with regard to the study of art there is some resonance with John Dewey's sensibility in *The Live Creature* in his distinguished work, *Art as Experience* (Dewey, 1934):

In common conception, the work of art is often identified with the building, book, painting, or statue in its existence apart from human experience. Since

the actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience, the result is not favorable to understanding. [...] When an art product once attains classic status, it somehow becomes isolated from the human conditions under which it was brought into being and from the human consequences it engenders in actual life-experience. (Dewey, 1934, p.1)

If it is assumed that narrative techniques or effects are anchored in cultural objects such as novels or prose, those that are linguistic, then it is reasonable to be suspicious of how narrative could be of any value to our discussion and understanding of contemporary art. Equally the translation of aesthetic values uncovered in the study of literature to our appreciation of contemporary art must surely be regarded as inappropriate on many levels; particularly those values derived from techniques associated with verbal media. If instead we can draw from 'life itself' as Barthes suggested (1977 (1966), p. 79), then surely we are somewhat free from these restrictions. While there is certainly common ground between the study of narrative in literature and in other fields, literature is in fact just one domain that can be helpful to understanding narrative in art. While Ochs and Capps appear to hold onto linguistics, or some other 'symbolic system', as a media requirement for their purposes, their idea of narrative is very much anchored in living experience. In this way, it may appear less tangible, more open-ended, and dependent on human-human interaction as a communicative process. Though their perspective retains common features familiar to the discussion of narrative in literature certain important concepts, such as plot, are a consequence of interaction rather than something designed by those involved in conversation. Therefore, what might be regarded as a technique in literature cannot be spoken about in the same

way when we consider narrative from a perspective such as that of social anthropology.

Like others using narrative within the social sciences Ochs and Capps make use of Labov's seminal work and Bruner's naturalistic perspective on narrative which, as previously mentioned, permeate texts falling within the scope of cognitive science and literary studies. By situating narrative in the everyday as 'rough works in progress' for 'grappling with reality' (p.7) Ochs and Capps see the events that constitute the basis for narrative as those we witness first-hand in our daily affairs or hear recounted by others elsewhere. Their interest, and the interest in social science at large, is to analyse stories for the purposes of uncovering clues about how people, or groups of people (communities), share or construct attitudes about aspects of their lives. A creative practitioner's perspective on the other hand is more likely to do with designing an artefact or event meaningfully enough for it to be remembered and shared.

Guided by my own practice I came to regard my interactive works in some cases as engaging in social intercourse in the way it has been referred to earlier by Pablo Helguera (Helguera, 2011, p.117/933). Unexpected situations generated by works located in public spaces draw on aesthetics that are social in a way that confront audiences. This is clear with respect to Jens Haaning's *Middelburg Summer* where the unsuspecting museum goer stumbles upon a fully operational clothing factory where art was expected. This kind of confrontation when coupled with the inverted hierarchal view of narrative presented by Ochs and Capps, supported by Bruner's naturalistic perspective, produces a dramatic situation where the plotlines are

unclear. The audience participates then, by constructing ‘rough works in progress’ to grapple with the situation. From a practitioner's perspective, when artists produce these kind of works they could be regarded as *creating scenes*; scenes in which the aesthetic appreciation is available not necessarily for the visual appearance of the work but from the overall social *situation* generated by its presence. By interpreting my own work in this way, I saw the artwork *as artefact* being replaced by the artwork *as situation*. I have come to refer to this combination of social aesthetics and small stories as *situated narrative*. What is important here from a practitioner's orientation, is not the particular stories that get constructed by an audience but what resources a practitioner can draw on to support the proliferation of narrative thinking in such situations. In my review of sociological and narrative research in the humanities I engaged with Erving Goffman's work in detail. His studies on *social dramaturgy* and *frame analysis* provides a body of very useful literature that supports a sociological basis for the design and fabrication of narrative situations. His work is therefore important to the establishment of the two social categories of the narrative frame work – the *ratified public domain* and the *non-ratified public domain*. These are phrases adapted from Goffman's construction of what he referred to as a *participation framework* which effectively describes in detail an entire taxonomy of participants and events involved in social gatherings⁵⁶. The following section introduces some key aspects

⁵⁶ An essay entitled *Footing* provides a good introduction of Goffman's observational methods and his structural perspective on social gatherings and situations. See GOFFMAN, E. 1981. *Footing. Forms of talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. In this he uses the term *ratified* to mark those participants officially included in a social exchange from those eavesdroppers or passers-by who are not ratified participants. His other works provide a deeper consideration of social situations and the roles

of Goffman's work and ties together this section by assisting the appreciation of creative strategies for linking social aesthetics with narrative in the guise of small stories.

2.5.5 Erving Goffman - social dramaturgy and frame analysis

Erving Goffman's research as a whole was directed in the social management of experience. From his early work in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959 (1971)) through *Asylums* (1961) and later studies of *Behavior in Public Places* (1963) and *Frame Analysis An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (1974 (1986)), he built an understanding of the social mechanisms utilised by people to manage their projected identities⁵⁷ in everyday situations. While in some cases, these were based on observations of extraordinary situations, as in those experienced by patients in mental institutions, most of his material is derived from observations of how people stabilise their public image through management strategies in public. The presentation of self, according to Goffman, is essentially a performance of the self, and as such he developed a theatrical framework making use of theatre and drama metaphors to communicate what he recognised in people's expressed behaviours. In his preface to *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* he states that the 'perspective employed in this report is that of the

participants adopt in them. For example, see in their entirety GOFFMAN, E. 1959 (1971). *The presentation of self in everyday life*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, GOFFMAN, E. 1963. *Behavior in public places; notes on the social organization of gatherings*, New York, Free Press of Glencoe.

⁵⁷ Projected here relates to the *performance* of identity which was an important feature evident in all of Goffman's work.

theatrical performance; the principles derived are dramaturgical ones' (1959 (1971)).

Frame Analysis, being Goffman's last major work, condensed much of his previous writing into a structural account of how people produce and perceive what he referred to as *frames*. The idea of frame which he unfolded in the book is a cognitive one, which can be understood if we think of what a bystander understands to be 'going on' when looking in on a situation. What it is that is going on is the reality of the situation from the perspective of the bystander; but this can be distinct from what is actually going on. To introduce this subjective perspective of the participant Goffman calls on Alfred Schutz's philosophy of 'multiple realities' (pp.2-6) which was inherited in part from ideas expressed by William James in *The Perception of Reality* (1869). The *perception* of reality is at the philosophical base of his Goffman's frame theory and he draws on Gregory Bateson's work at Fleishacker Zoo in 1952 where Bateson drew attention to the distinction between play (fighting) and serious activities (real fighting) in otters. Goffman used Bateson's observations to help clarify what he intended by a frame where the interpretation of normal actions can be contrasted with actions understood to be 'play'.

With respect to the narrative framework outlined later in chapter 5, Goffman's work is critical in terms of understanding how narrative thinking can be activated by art or design works. The way his theory allows the everyday to be segregated in ordinary and dramatic 'doings' is an important factor in the *social dimensions*

which are expanded in the framework. Two key aspects of Goffman's Frame Analysis which can be briefly summarised here are *Primary Frameworks* and *Keyings*⁵⁸.

Goffman uses the term *framework* to refer to the idea of a 'schemata of interpretation' (p. 21). In this schema he defines 'primary' to be the main or fundamental framework employed in the interpretation of events or actions in the world. These events are perceived as being *literal*. By this he means they are what they seem to be. A couple having an argument in a public street is simply that; and not a decoy to distract an intended victim targeted by a pickpocket. The idea of *Keying* however involves a layering of other secondary meanings over the primary framework. When introducing *Keying* he picks up from Bateson by defining it as a process of transcription:

I refer here to a set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else. The process of transcription is called keying. (Goffman, 1974 (1986), p. 44)

While actions framed entirely within primary framework are said to be 'real' or 'actually' happening, events that are keyed are not literally happening. Instead it can be said that the *staging of the events* is actually happening. Keyed events depend on a type of event that exist already in a primary framework and some of

⁵⁸ These are expanded in chapters 2 and 3 of Frame Analysis. They provide the conceptual basis for more refined concepts further on in the book, such as Designs and Fabrications and his Theatrical Frame.

the basic keys employed in society are given categories such as *Make-Believe*, *Contests*, and *Ceremonials* and these are keys which are benign in the sense that participants are awake to both the primary framework and its keying.

Later in what Goffman refers to as *Designs and Fabrications* he demonstrates cases where a participant is intentionally misled to interpret a keying for an action perceived to be located in a primary framework. Such designs again may be benign, as in a *playful deceit* or a *hoax*. Fabrications can also be engineered to be exploitative as in the machinations of a con man playing a respectable door to door salesman and seeking to gain illicit access to the home of a vulnerable 'dupe'. Goffman also shows how these keyings can be laminated endlessly. So, an apparently vulnerable 'dupe', who is actually an undercover police officer, knowingly allows an apparent salesman (thief) into her home for the purpose of catching the actual thief. Goffman's analysis expands these primary frames, keyings, and rekeyings, into a structured hierarchy where the role of all participants engaged in a situation can be unfolded into a theatrical framework based on their social actions in everyday scenarios. Goffman also addresses how vulnerable frames can be. and it is in situations, or participants 'crack-up' that the. There are occasions where a keyed frame, a design or fabrication (e.g. a hoax), breaks down and the edge of the frame becomes exposed resulting in the risk of a *scene being created*. These situations produce significant, psychologically eventful, experiences and are the basic content of what Ochs and Capps' refer to as small or personal stories. In the event of a scene being created the knowledge drawn upon by the individual caught in the scene, or by an onlooking bystander, to explain the

situation created by the breakdown is serviced by the kind folk psychology that Bruner has discussed.

In this way Goffman's work provides a rich catalogue of named social actions anchored in observations of familiar, or at least recognisable, everyday situations. As such his work is of enormous benefit to creative practitioners concerned with fabricating designs for public spaces. His approach has produced an academic resource for designers and artists that can help guide their design process or explain their creative intentions. As a consequence, his work has been referenced in relation to design projects that involve interaction in public spaces.

2.5.6 Goffman and situated practices

Since Goffman was concerned with embodied face-to-face interaction between humans his work has had some impact within design particularly where interaction is a central issue. For instance, his work has been cited in games studies (Salen and Zimmerman, 2006, Moore et al., 2007) and there has been some effort within the last decade to expand his analysis of performance in relation to human factors in design for HCI (Chung et al., 2005, Juhlin and Ostergren, 2006, Ludvigsen, 2006, McCarthy, 2007, Mutlu et al., 2009). These projects demonstrate how Goffman's work has marked approaches to interaction and provide an insight into the practicalities he offers to design. Of particular interest here is how he has been adopted into studies of interaction design in HCI that sit at the cusp of art & design practice (Dalsgaard and Hansen, 2008).

In a paper entitled *Performing Perception – Staging Aesthetics of Interaction* (2008) Dalsgaard and Hansen borrow from Goffman with the intention of developing a framework for art and design that supports the creation of interactive artworks where the spectator can be seen to play an important role in transforming the experience of interacting with an artwork or system. The authors are concerned with aesthetics of performed interaction and a *second order of interactivity*⁵⁹ that lies outside that which occurs directly between the user(s) of a system and the system. In the papers cited above the authors Mutlu, Shiwa et al. recognise the benefits of Goffman's various *participant roles* in the design of human-robot interfaces. They borrow from his distinction between *ratified* participants and the non-ratified participants. A ratified participant is one officially included in a face-to-face interaction, such as a conversant, as opposed to *passers-by*, *overhearers*, or *eavesdroppers*⁶⁰ who may also have access to the conversation. Mutlu, Shiwa et al. used the status of ratified participant roles as a way of studying human-robot interaction (HRI). In short Robot gaze cues were explored as a method separating those interacting with robot interfaces with a view to designing more efficient HRI systems. Of more interest here is how Dalsgaard and Hansen promoted the non-ratified passer-by to a more important status, and

⁵⁹ Earlier in this chapter I referenced work around human factors in design for HCI and CSCW where the social space around computers was considered important ground for interface design considerations. See footnotes 51 to 53. *Second order interactivity* is relevant in this context and spectator is of central importance to the design of public interfaces. See REEVES, S., BENFORD, S., O'MALLEY, C. & FRASER, M. 2005. Designing the spectator experience. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human factors in computing systems*. Portland, Oregon, USA: ACM.

⁶⁰ See footnote 62.

introduce Goffman's ideas around *focussed* and *unfocussed* interaction (Goffman, 1963). In short focussed interaction refers to situations where participants operate together in a shared interactive exchange. An activity of talk between two or more people in a gathering is an example. Unfocussed interaction is where participants monitor the activity of a situation in which they are involved in order to remain 'uninvolved' ⁶¹. Goffman provides a detail account of the subtle strategies employed by participants to manage their involvement in a scene. By adapting such concepts from Goffman Dalsgaard and Hansen reposition their study of design to recognise the bystander as an empowered participant. The broader social environment in which the interaction occurs becomes a place where spectators can be seen to influence the user's performance of the interaction. Their paper references artworks that include Michael Cross' *Bridge* at Dilson Gove, Café Gallery Projects London in 2006; Kaffee Matthew's *Sonic Bed* at Ars Electronica, OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz in 2006; and Dalsgaard's own *Gum Façade* at die Internationale Susswarenmesse (ISM) in Cologne, Germany, also in 2006. They posit the term 'performing perception' to refer to the situation where a user interacting with a system, or engaging with an artwork, is conscious of their interaction with the system in the presence of an audience. The user therefore performs their actions in response to the system but also in a way that accounts for the presence of onlookers. Dalsgaard and Hansen's discussion of such work relates

⁶¹ This is a brief indication of what is intended by focussed and unfocussed behaviour. In *Behavior in Public Places* Goffman dedicates six chapters of the book to describing Focussed and Unfocused interaction. See pp. 33-123 GOFFMAN, E. 1963. *Behavior in public places; notes on the social organization of gatherings*, New York, Free Press of Glencoe.

it work in HCI incorporating human social factors and embodiment as it was mentioned earlier in research in CSCW. The art and design works in question are therefore evaluated by reference to micro-social orientations as already discussed in relation to Lucy Suchman and of course Goffman⁶². The aesthetic appreciation of such works demonstrates a social basis which links them with my previous review of social aesthetics. However, Michael Cross's *Bridge* or Kaffe Matthews' *Sonic Bed* do not carry any of the political or activist associations we would recognised in Palle Nielsen's *The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society* or Jens Haaning's *Middelburg Summer*. The aesthetic issues here are located in face-to-face situations, the small affairs of everyday life which concerned Goffman, and which are more accurately provided for by the term *micro-social aesthetics*.

To further illustrate this with respect to *Sonic Bed* the artist apparently expressed puzzlement as to why people who entered the audio space did not move around or explore the experience of the music but instead took up a position in the bed and lay motionless (Dalsgaard and Hansen, 2008, p.11). One could surmise that the instinct to remain unfocused, that is not to be at the centre of other spectators' attention, was a contributing factor to participants underperforming. In accordance with Dalsgaard and Hansen's observations, a single user interacting with Sonic Bed

⁶² The work of Paul Dourish should also be recognised here as Dalsgaard and Hansen use him to establish a foundation in phenomenology that gives context to social actions performed around ubiquitous or context aware systems. See DOURISH, P. 2001a. Seeking a foundation for context-aware computing. *Hum.-Comput. Interact.*, 16, 229-241. Dourish's work also traces a line from social concerns in contemporary interactive design, back to people like Suchman who utilised an anthropological approach to design problems. See chapter 3 Social Computing pp. 55-97 in DOURISH, P. 2001b. *Where the action is : the foundations of embodied interaction*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press.

may experience a reluctance to be on-stage. As a double-bed the work facilitates more than one participant to interacting with it encouraging people to lie together. If participants, previously unacquainted, overcome their instinct to remain unfocussed, then *Sonic Bed* raises the social stakes, by enabling spectators to perceive more than one frame simultaneously. In one way a participant is simply engaging with an artwork in a public space but in a situation that may otherwise be regarded as private and intimate. The perception of overlapping frames is addressed by Goffman in a categorisation of primary frameworks which he refers to as *segregation* (1974 (1986), pp.35-36). For various social and cultural reasons tension exists at the boundaries where different frames may be interpreted. Choosing one frame over another may result in dramatically different interpretations. He uses an example of mouth-to-mouth contact used in the context of a rescue or medical procedure of resuscitation as clarification of what could be at stake if an inappropriate frame is selected. The perception of an inappropriate frame then is a cognitive jump-off point for narrative thinking. With respect to Matthews' *Sonic Bed* it would not be appropriate in ordinary sense to refer to it as a narrative work. If a participant perceives sleeping or being in a bed to be a private act then the psychology of the situation produced by the design of the work creates a subtle risk for the participant managing their public performance.

While Goffman's perspective on framing has been illustrated, the theatrical metaphor from his earlier work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1959 (1971)) can also be considered in situations where participants perform in response to a work. The theatrical frame which he developed in *Frame*

Analysis (1974 (1986), pp.124-155) incorporates the idea that a performance is 'that arrangement which transforms an individual into a stage performer' who can then be 'looked to for engaging behavior, by persons in an audience role' (p.124). Following the discussion of performing perception one can see how other interactive electronic works such as Chris O'Shea's *Hand From Above* (2009) more obviously make use of this theatrical metaphor. The artist's website carries the following statement about the work:

Hand From Above encourages us to question our normal routine when we often find ourselves rushing from one destination to another. Inspired by Land of the Giants and Goliath, we are reminded of mythical stories by mischievously unleashing a giant hand from the BBC Big Screen. Passers by will be playfully transformed. (O'Shea, 2009) ⁶³

The extrinsic association of a pre-existing biblical narrative (David and Goliath) is clearly evident in this statement by the artist. This is reminiscent of the way art historians call on literary references as a way of accounting for narrative in paintings. This was explicit in the examples given in the *Artist as Narrator* (Hill et al., 2005) such as Thomas Faed's dickensian boy and was implicit in many of choices Nanay discussed as narrative pictures. While O'Shea may have a private mythological Goliath narrative in mind which guides its meaning for him, it is unlikely passers-by engaging with the work will access it. However, O'Shea's statement that 'Passers by will be playfully transformed' (that is, from non-ratified and unfocussed passers-by to ratified and focused participants) reveals the attraction of the work corresponding to what I have described before in terms of

⁶³ See <http://www.chrisoshea.org/hand-from-above> which also includes video documentation of the work in action.

micro-social aesthetics. With respect to narrative, there are at least four ways it can be seen to be at play. On the one hand there is a narrative impression held backstage by the practitioner involving Goliath like creatures acting in an imaginary world derived from mythology. Secondly, there is framed a theatrical scene in which passers-by are transformed into actors whose performance is one that is guided by the artwork. There is also the perceived multiple realities of the wider situation in which confused onlookers engage Bruner's narrative mode of thought to air, probe, and otherwise attempt to make sense of the situation (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.7). Finally, the work produces a highly reportable situation providing the material for other personal narratives (small stories) to be shared and discussed with those not present to witness it first-hand.

Dalsgaard and Hansen's concept of 'performing perception' helps in understanding how everyday social factors, as they were conceived by Goffman, contribute to supporting artists and designers concerned with the aesthetics of interaction. Here, blending Goffman's work with everyday storytelling as it is presented by Ochs and Capps, provides a basis extending narrative to a broader category of works. This has not yet been articulated in any significant way for art and design practitioners.

2.6 Summary

This chapter addressed four issues starting with the perceived lack of interest in narrative from the perspective of creative practitioners. It progressed to discuss how narratology has tended to set boundaries around verbal media (literary art) as best suited for narrative before underlining the importance of disciplinary contexts

in defining narrative. It then demonstrated incompatibilities in the discussion of narrative in pictorial art emphasising approaches used by critics and art historians that relate to the interpretation of pictorial content as narrative. By showing that narrative is in large an integral part of the cognitive strategies used to interpret works the opportunity was opened to point to psychological perspectives which provide the possibility to better understand how audiences have narrative experiences of visual art. Since contemporary practice is not exclusively reliant on visual aesthetics the argument could be forwarded for social factors to be regarded as important resources for the understanding of narrative in contemporary. Erving Goffman's work on social dramaturgy and framing was discussed to expand the notion of social aesthetics in a way that was relevant to narrative thinking and everyday storytelling. By doing so the particular approach to narrative taken by social anthropologists such as Ochs and Capps, can also be seen as relevant to the disciplinary interests of creative practitioners. The work of Kaffe Matthews and Chris O'Shea were used to provide examples of how this is possible.

This review of literature and practice provides a basis for four classes of the narrative framework to be expanded in Chapter 5. The review overall demonstrated that narrative can be understood as being derived from the properties of works; for example, pre-renaissance painting techniques described by Wendy Steiner and Nelson Goodman as representing plotlines to be followed by the eye of the viewer. These properties might be regarded as belonging to the domain of the artefact. We can also see separate approaches to narrative in *Artist as Narrator* and Bence Nanay's experiential perspective. Narrative interpretations can be based on

extrinsic stories imported from our wider experience of art and culture, or otherwise, the things we are simply aware of when looking at pictures. Narrative in this way is a cognitive strategy employed at the interface of a work and constitutes a second way of understanding narrative's presence in the experience of visual art. Through the examples of how Dalsgaard and Hansen have used Goffman, it is possible to see narrative operating within a social space around works which are populated by acquaintances (ratified members) and passers-by (non-ratified members) and the possibility of small stories emanating from the scene that is created by the design of a work. With regard to how these perspectives may be important to practitioners is dependent on the mode of practice. The following chapters on methodologies and findings will be dedicated in part to showing how my practice provided the ground for the justification of these classes of the framework and which are fully described later in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1. Overview

Before introducing the methodology, it is useful to review the research questions introduced in Chapter 1. In section 1.3, I asked if narrative is valued in contemporary art practice? If so, then where is that evident? And, if it can be found how can that which is available in the discourse on narrative in contemporary practice be described? These questions pointed to the central research question which is aimed at supporting the creative arts researcher articulating their position on narrative in a way that is congruent with the development of scholarship in the arts. In responding to all these questions there are three categories of outlined in this chapter. These is the data from my own creative practice using a combination of practice-based methods. There was also data retrieved from articles on narrative as it was discussed in relation to art and design practice. Then finally there was data gathered from a survey and study of practitioners. The latter two, the data retrieved from articles and the survey and study of practitioners, used qualitative methods to uncover patterns in what was said about narrative in relation to creative practice.

With respect to the creative practice the research began with the creation of work using a process which was intuitive and undetermined by any theories of narrative. That is not to say connections with theory were unimportant, just that I set out to work in accordance a creative process previously employed in my practice and prior to the study programme. The PhD was not intended to improve my artistic

practice by making better artworks, but instead to help defend it in an academic context and show how narrative was central to the process. The narrative framework provides the basis for that academic defence by finding and connecting the literature which was deemed relevant to the practice. The practical work can be regarded as one form of data which could be crossed with outcomes from the analyses of narrative found in the literature and outcomes from the survey and practitioner studies to be discussed here.

In section 3.2, I have classified the creative practice in four categories which are partially determined by the technologies and media used. These categories are related to how narrative was approached in the literature review. The possibility to discuss narrative in relation to art practice was opened by pointing to existing approaches taken by art historians where narrative was discussed in relation to attributes in pictures and in applying particular interpretative strategies⁶⁴. These approaches to narrative in practice were also extended by recognising a social dimension to the appreciation of narrative in art. This social orientation was introduced by combining Bruner, Ochs and Capps, and Goffman in the discussion provided by Dalsgaard and Hansen and demonstrated in the discussion of works by Kaffe Matthews and Chris O'Shea. I have noted before that my practice is

⁶⁴In Chapter 2 much of this was available from Wendy Steiner's analysis of visual composition in pre-renaissance painting. There was also an account of such properties in Nelson Goodman's *Twisted Tales*. Steiner and others expanded on other post-renaissance features such the pregnant moment to show how monophase images could be regarded as facilitating narrative. Regarding interpretative strategies I am recalling here the accounts in *Artist as Narrator* catalogue and Bence Nanay's paper *Narrative Pictures* which extended the understanding of interpretation to include the viewer's cognitive awareness of actions not depicted in the image.

eclectic in that I work with a range of media and technologies. In this chapter I categorise the works produced during the study programme as being *manually-composed*, *auto-composed*, *data-driven* and *responsive* to facilitate the discussion of practice-based methods, and to allow me to link the work with the approaches to narrative introduced in the literature review. In each case the working process is underlined with a view to connecting it to the discussion of narrative in the following chapter and eventually to the framework.

In addition to the creative practice, the collection and analysis of attitudes to narrative found in writings on narrative and art and in the surveys of practitioners is qualitative, and amplifies that discovered through the practice. As the research focused on the use of narrative in language around art, I used qualitative analysis software Nvivo which helped with the evaluation of large sets of data. The language about narrative in art is widely distributed in academic and non-academic sources which needed to be efficiently collected and analysed. I participated in formal training in the use of Nvivo and the employment of *Thematic Analysis* (TA) for the collection, organisation, coding and evaluation of data collected as part of the qualitative review. TA is prevalent in areas such as psychology and sociology (Braun and Clarke, 2006) but flexible enough to be translated into different disciplinary and methodological contexts. This is discussed in section 3.3 where TA as a method is described with examples of how it was applied to get at the sense of how narrative was used in relation to the discussion of contemporary art. Finally, a survey targeting creative practitioners is described which aimed to gather some sense of their understanding of narrative, but also their attitude towards it

with respect to their practice. The chapter is completed then, by detailing a study where practitioners were asked to respond to images shown in a controlled situation. These studies required subjects to write accounts of imagery presented to them in a lab situation which were then submitted for analysis which again was conducted through Nvivo. Some of the images used in these studies were works produced, or collected, from earlier activities in the research. I selected images from the *Boundary Work* exhibitions I curated in the Wandersford Quay Gallery in 2010 and 2012⁶⁵. There were also images of paintings which showed up as prevalent examples of pictorial narrative during the literature review. Samples of my own work developed as part of the programme, and before it, were also included.

As part of my desk review on methodologies I examined approaches employed by creative practitioners in art and design as well as areas such as social science that made use of qualitative methods and narrative methods (Orna and Stevens, 1995, Kuniavsky, 2003, Bochner and Ellis, 2003, Gray and Malins, 2004, Rose, 2007, Tullis and Albert, 2008, Andrews et al., 2008 (2013), Leavy, 2009, Langdrige and Hagger-Johnson, 2009, Silverman, 2010, Creswell, 2013). Some of these would be relevant in the treatment of the different data I was to collect and analyse. The research approach, by using a combination of practice-based and qualitative methods, allowed me to identify and describe narrative in my own work and relate it back to what I discovered in the literature review. The wider qualitative study of academic and non-academic documents exposed the attitude of others to narrative

⁶⁵ See Appendix 2 for details on both *Boundary Work* exhibitions.

and so the combination of methods amplified my experience into a more objective view of narrative which could later be used to structure the framework. In this way I could address the questions reiterated above. The narrative framework can be regarded as a response to the central research question.

The creative practice and the works produced as part of the research programme will be introduced first. Following this will be a description of the analysis conducted in relation to the use of narrative in the language around art. This description will mainly focus on the collection of data and the use of the Nvivo software in establishing patterns in the use of narrative in language. Finally, the online survey of arts practitioners and the controlled studies will be presented to complete the chapter.

3.2 Creative Practice

As I noted in the summary of chapters in the introduction, rather than describing the works directly in the body of the thesis I have instead placed them together in Appendix 1 where they are numbered A1.1 to A1.8. This is to facilitate a better flow in the main thesis⁶⁶. As also mentioned in this chapter, the works are categorised as *manually-composed*, *auto-composed*, *data-driven* and *responsive*. A brief explanation of these categories is as follows.

Firstly, *manually-composed* works are defined as works where the creation methods are fully in my control from their inception through to their exhibition.

⁶⁶ Please refer to the note in Chapter 1, section 1.6.2 on referencing works and images in the main body of the thesis and in the appendices.

For instance, in some cases I use a medium or large format film camera to capture images in a single moment. These are chemically processed and printed in a darkroom, or alternatively scanned and digitally printed, and there is minimal manipulation of the image after it is captured. *Myth #08 Eachros* (A1.1.8) is an example of an image of an oak tree captured with a 5x4inch field camera using Fujichrome Velvia 100 film which is then chemically processed, scanned, colour adjusted, and printed. Another example is when I assemble composite images from many images collected over time before printing them for exhibitions. *The Tailor* (A1.4) is an example. While such images appear in many respects to be photographs they are often heavily manipulated and modified with digital drawing techniques (see Figure A1.4.1 and Figure A1.4.2). Large parts of the image may also be generated with digital modelling and rendering tools.

A second category of works I referred to as *auto-composed*. These works use programming techniques to manipulate pixels in an image, or images, or directly draw the image using functions that I have written in advance. The final images, which are sometimes unexpected, eventually settle in a pattern that is stable and may be printed or presented on screen or projected. *Tween* (A1.2) and *Family Portrait* (A1.5) are examples of *auto-composed* works.

Data-driven is a third category of work and *Pulse* (A1.3) is an example. In this case data from a network is used to drive the content of the piece. The outcomes presented are dependent on the data that is input to the programme and will therefore change over time if that data is altered or updated. In the case of *Pulse* (A1.3) the audio track of a ten-minute animated film was controlled by the data

from a quasar (black-hole) being studied by researchers at an observatory in Cork, Ireland.

Finally, *responsive* works are interactive and designed so the content of the work can change in accordance with the presence or behaviour of visitors in a space. Examples of *responsive* works are *Probe* (A1.6), *Trails* (A1.7), and the *Narrative Intervention at Cork City Gaol* (A1.8). In the case of this research the interactivity was designed in some cases to stimulate a response in the audience or otherwise to provoke them into action. The methods associated with these works will be described by category in the following sections.

3.2.1 Creative methods: manually-composed work

The creation of work has for me always followed a method that enables narrative to spontaneously enter the process over the duration of the production of the work, from initial concepts through to the display and exhibition. All works typically follow a pattern which moves chronologically through three distinct stages of development. These stages are characterised by *speculation*, *design* and *crafting*. Each of these stages can be described in terms of the nature of the creative activities but also the relationship I have with features of the work that emerge through the practice. For example, with respect to *The Tailor* (A1.4) shown in Figure 3.1, the characters developed through the process were placed in an environment where narrative possibilities began to unfold. I have



Figure 3.1 The Tailor 2009 (large format digital print in three panels measuring in total 3000mm x 1000mm)



Figure 3.2 GeneMachine (2001) 2400mm x 400mm

These worlds and characters emerge from assembling in a speculative way the information that has been gathered or created over time. This is a process I have used for some time and previous works such as *GeneMachine* (Figure 4.2) are examples. In the case of *GeneMachine* the work was an offshoot of my interest in



Figure 3.3 Soundscape (2003) 14 images at 1000mm x 750mm each

architectural structures, which are also evident in a series of photographs entitled *Soundscape* (Figure 3.3). In these works, a database of photographic material is build up over time, sometimes weeks or years. In the case of *Soundscape* many of

the images were taken around La Défense business district in Paris, and are a good example of how a place can be photographed purely for the aesthetic quality of its architecture without any preconceived narrative objectives. These images were held in physical database of slides and selected later as the elements of the work's future *mise en scène*. This is the same method used for *GeneMachine* when the architectural images were crossed with portraits of characters photographed much later. The interior space in the central frame of the piece, shown in Figure 3.2, was the final element simulated in 3D and crafted to virtually place the central character. The method is one which has continued on in more recent work of which *The Tailor* (A1.4) is an example.

The method can be summarised by seeing each of these works beginning with an aesthetic interest where I respond to an object (architecture for example) or a place (urban or rural landscape), and invest resources in exploring it through photography or 3D simulation. The phase is speculative and primarily focused on techniques that will deliver an interesting image in good enough quality to be used later. Once produced the image is put away until a time when I see it connecting with other imagery either photographed, modelled, or digitally drawn. The process in the speculative stage is not entirely devoid of narrative but narrative thinking tends to be deferred and treated more directly in the second phase.

The *design phase* becomes more about composing and assembling elements together into sequences or digital montages and connecting elements into a network of associations that give rise to narrative readings. By juxtaposing visual information in the working process, the importance of narrative grows in this

phase. In the creation of *The Tailor* (Figure 3.4) for instance, the various entities represented in the final work were collected separately: the dress; the sewing machine; the computer hubs; the architectural elements; the landscape generated by genetic algorithms⁶⁷; and the figure gazing directly out of the frame on the right-hand panel. As these became available they were stitched together, removed, re-photographed, and reintroduced, until the ordering and composition was satisfactory. By ordering I mean the visual correspondence between the various elements in the composition. For example, the play between the presence of the tailor (character in the far right of the piece) and the apparent symbolism of the dress is possibly a more obvious example of this ordering. Maybe a less obvious example is the use of architecture as a device for segregating or framing distinct actors in the composition. This technique is evident in the other works mentioned above but is also prevalent in examples of renaissance painting where architecture was used to break the surface of the painting into discreet sections, rooms, or stanzas, as was discussed in the literature review.

The *crafting phase* is concerned mainly with the technical completion of the work to an appropriate standard for printing, presentation and exhibition. In this phase the narrative of the piece has largely been settled, and the work is prepared for exhibition. There may be additional concerns about the placement of the work in

⁶⁷ The landscape area in the background of the piece was automatically generated by an algorithm driven by genetic propensity for aesthetic balance. The algorithm was designed by Dr. Paul Walsh, Computer Science Department at Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland, who specialised in the development of machine learning software that allows non-specialist users to create designs and artefacts, ranging from game objects to landscape paintings. Dr. Walsh participated in the Boundary Work I exhibition described in Appendix 2 – Events.

the exhibition space which help facilitate a narrative reading of the work. This was not important with *The Tailor* (A1.4) as much as it was with a series of images such as *Soundscape* which would be require consideration about the arrangement of the works in the space. Again, this was alluded to in the literature review where religious narrative painting in Christian churches is organised around a nave or altar piece to promote an ordered reading of the work.

In the case of works such as *Myths* (A1.1) the duration between the various stages is much greater compared to works such as *The Tailor* (A1.4). While *The Tailor* was produced over a relatively brief period of weeks, *Myths* is more complex. The work began in a similar vein to *GeneMachine*, collecting images of a rural landscape, as opposed to urban architecture. This work is of a different ilk to any of the other works developed as part of the research programme. *Myths* is currently incomplete and ongoing. It is a project of long duration and can be described as interventionist in a way that draws on Claire Bishop's description of participatory arts. In relation to the *Artist Placement Group* (APG) Bishop states:

The APG's activities go straight to the heart of contemporary debates about the functionality of art, and the desirability (or not) of having social goals.

Myths is comprised of a collection of media, such as audio-visual and photographic works, which focus on an area called the Upper Lee Valley in Cork County, Ireland. The area is populated with lakes, mountains, ancient forest lands, and is surrounded by a landscape of intact blanket bog and heathlands. These landscape-types support complex ecosystems which developed from the Bronze Age. These rare natural habitat types are protected under specific European directives of

Natura 2000 such as the EU Habitats Directive⁶⁸. Many of these intact heathlands are now threatened by recent changes in policies for land use. The threat has been accelerated in recent years by the rezoning of rural lands for industrial windfarms. The interpretation of the Habitats Directive by local and national planning authorities has resulted in an increased threat to these landscapes and the ancient species of flora and fauna they support.

Myths (A1.1) is a work that draws on the irony that is implicit in the renewable energy narrative as it is communicated on behalf of an industry which has become influential as a result of the rapid growth in the green energy sector. To speak about this work from the perspective of methods it is important to say that the initial photographs of these landscapes were taken in response to the visual impact of the landscapes themselves. When confronted with these environments they can be arresting in their beauty, so the initial attraction was the aesthetics of the landscape environment, but also the mythologies that were accessible through them. These landscapes, in their natural state, are bound up with mythology and can be regarded as a tangible connection to an Irish story-type so the characters of ancient mythology could be imagined by simply looking into these vast undisturbed rural spaces. When the camera was directed across Maoileann (see Figure 1.1 and Figure 3.4) it was possible to perceive it as a set for ancient

⁶⁸ Natura 2000 and its associated policies are detailed on the environmental section of the European Union's website at:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm



Figure 3.4 Myth #1 Video Frame from Maoileann. The blanket bog land and heathland is now severely degraded; this scene is now populated by industrial scale wind turbines.

stories. In this way the first photographs taken had no explicit objective in mind as they were an emotional response to a landscape soaked in mythological heritage. In an analogous way to how the La Défense business district in Paris was inspiring as an architectural set for some future narrative, the rural landscape offered, what appeared at the time to be, a fruitful resource for a work involving mythology and its connection to landscape.

When these landscapes and the wider area of the Upper Lee Valley became rezoned for industrial development, the meaning of the place changed dramatically. From then a different story became evident which was to do with the way in different agencies of the state characterised the Irish landscape. For example, how such landscape types were narrated by Irish Tourist Board ran in opposition to those sewn into the promotions of energy companies supported by government environmental policy. At stake is not the scenic amenity or sensitive

ecology supported by the heathlands and ancient blanket bogs, but also the cultural mythologies with which the physical environment is associated. *Myths* (A1.1) therefore, is a work which operates in the confrontation between ancient narratives embedded in cultural heritage (the landscape in this case) and evolving contemporary narratives about green technology and its promise as a solution to climate change. Both narratives can be referred to as mythologies since neither gains its rhetorical force by being anchored in facts.

As such, *Myths* (A1.1) uses an extended range of methods comparative to other works such as *The Tailor* (A1.4). *Myths* is a work which is intended to be exhibited in the conventional environments of the white cube gallery spaces. However, it is also political and as such, individual pieces from *Myths* (see Figure A1.1.8 *Myth #10 The Pass* and Figure A1.1.9 *Myth #11 Above Gougane Barra*) were integrated into the documentation used to support planning observations, planning appeals, and high court challenges to industrial planning applications between 2013 and 2016. The methodology that supports this work involves researching environmental and government policy documents, individual planning applications, Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) used to assess and inform planning decisions. There were also engagements with members of local communities (see caption for A1.1.12) which used dialogic methods of the kind discussed by Grant H. Kester (2004)⁶⁹. The work demonstrates a concern for how

⁶⁹ Dialogic methods as characterised by Kester were also applied in other aspects of the research. In the curation of Boundary Work I for instance, work by Dr. Aidan Coffey & Dr. Jim O'Mahony was negotiated in detail before being developed into a narrative sequence of images to be displayed in the exhibition. In other cases, third parties content experts were also central to the development of works such as *Pulse* (A1.3).

narrative rhetoric is used by state authorities and corporations to control attitudes to the environment which serve political and commercial interests in addition to well-intentioned strategies for mitigating climate change.

3.2.2 Creative methods: auto-composed work

While *speculation*, *design* and *crafting* can hold for *auto-composed* works in the same way as for *manually-composed* work the material process is significantly different. In the case of both *Tween* (A1.2) and *Family Portrait* (A1.5) the speculation phase began with the development and exploration of code. By exploring the library of functions associated with different server-side and client-side scripting languages such as PHP, MySQL, JavaScript, and ActionScript™, possibilities were recognised for the way narratives could emerge unexpectedly from blending random images together. For this piece, a website was set up to allow artists to submit work to an online database. Two images from the database were selected by the system and blended together each time the webpage was refreshed. Figure 3.5 is an example of the output from the system which is described in section A1.2. of Appendix 1. Once the site was implemented I acted as a moderator and those who contributed images were invited to download and



Figure 3.5 Examples output from *Tween* (Green, 2008) (Online)

use as many images from the system at their discretion. For me the idea of giving away control was important. While I uploaded my own images to the database many of the images with which they were blended produced surprising results. In some cases, the outputs changed entirely any meaning associated with the original input images. The visual features of the output images are similar to a transition between two frames in a video and could be interpreted as having a level of narrativity by virtue of their intertextual association with video or film media. These works also resonated with some ideas encountered through the literature review in relation to cognitive blending and prototype theory developed by George Lakoff (1999), Mark Turner (1996), Marie-Laure Ryan (1991) and David Herman (2002). These works surfaced in relation to Nanay's position on interpreting visual art with an awareness for actions that are not shown in a picture. This cognitive

perspective on narrative has been a popular approaches to narrative across media from the mid-nineteen nineties.

Where the script in *Tween* (A1.2) generates the image instantaneously, the script that drives *Family Portrait* (A1.5) builds the image over time (Figure 3.6). While a general impression can be detected within a minute, the full resolution of the

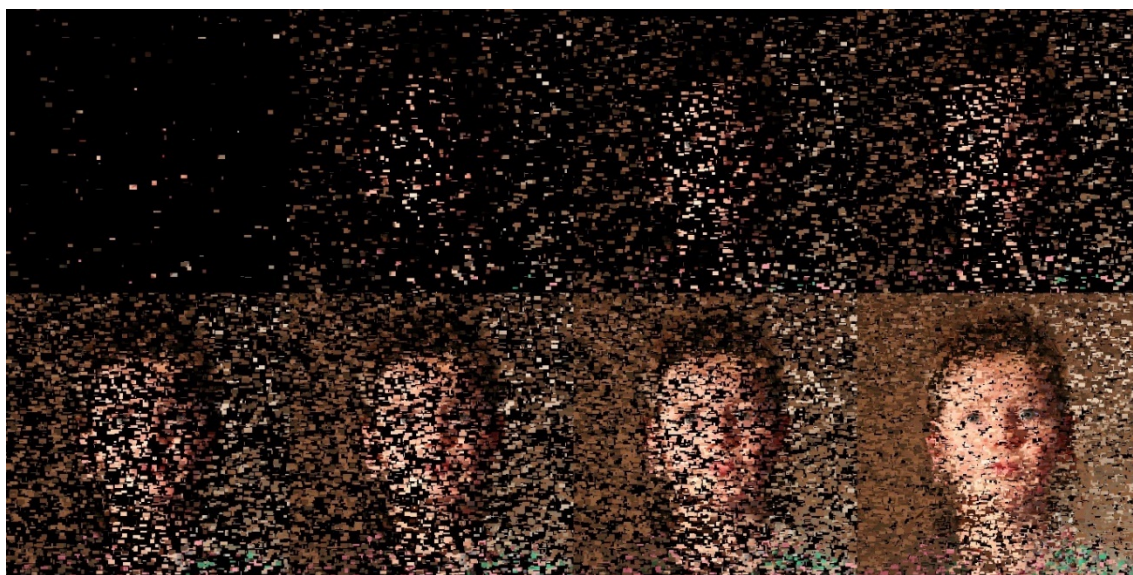


Figure 3.6 Illustration of emerging image in *Family Portrait* (Green, 2010)

image may take up to fifteen minutes to complete (see Figure 3.7). Because of this *Family Portrait* can be presented as either a print generated from the system, in an analogous way to *Tween*, or as a living animated portrait. When viewed as an animated work the viewer sees small blocks of the image being consistently replaced. When viewed as an animated work the viewer sees small blocks of the image being consistently replaced. The images used to generate the composite portrait came from different family members photographed over three generations and as the script continues to run the features of individual members drift in and out of view. Though it is possible to see movement in the image as it

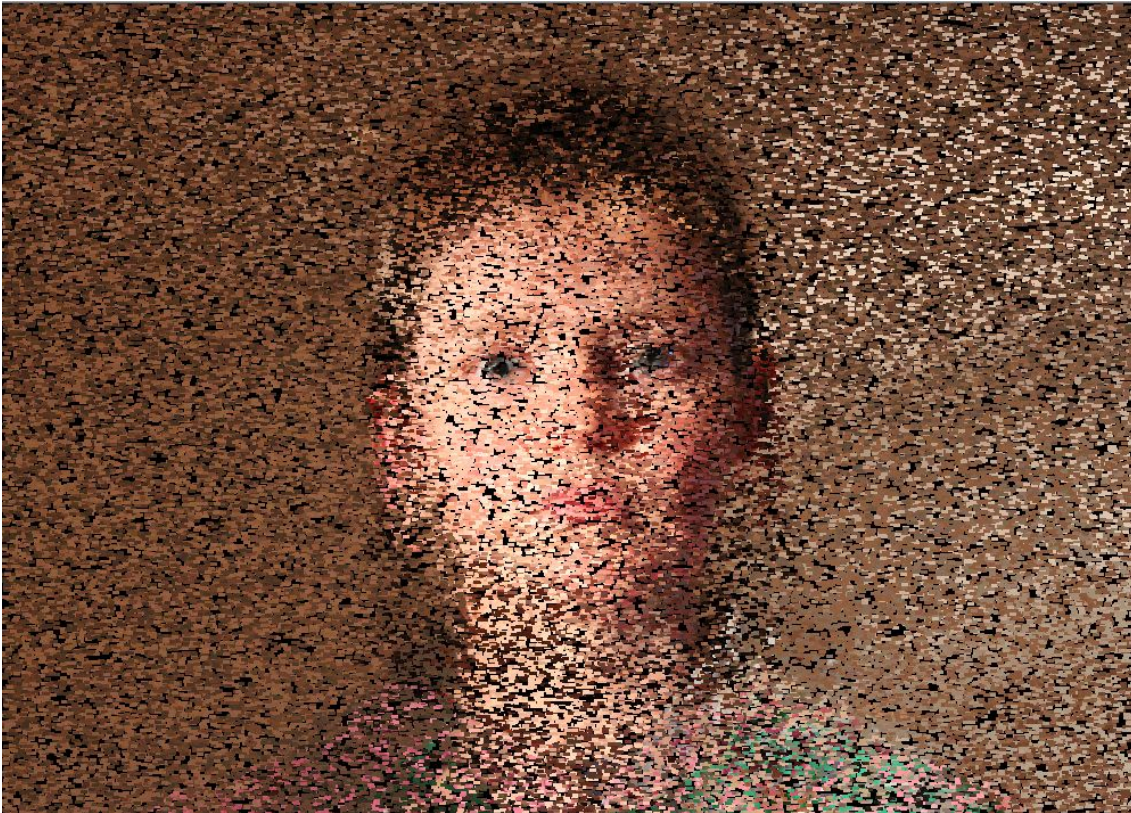


Figure 3.7 Example of image output from *Family Portrait* (Green, 2010)

consistently rebuilds itself, changes to the facial identities is largely imperceptible in real-time, and will not register unless a viewer waits or looks away for several minutes. The resulting images are quite still, in a way one might expect from a painted portrait where the sitter has been frozen in a pose by the artist. A portrait however, is generally understood as a representation of one individual, often idealised, so certain selected qualities of the sitter can be preserved. In *Family Portrait* the visual effect of different identities drifting in and out of the viewer's consciousness again resonated with material I encountered in the literature review. Erving Goffman's studies on the 'performance of self' (Goffman, 1959 (1971)), and 'social dramaturgy' (Goffman, 1963) brought in some ideas about how we manage our identity in public. I found these concepts useful in the developing my thinking around narrative, particularly those relevant to later responsive works,

such as *Probe* (A1.6), as they provided some meaning through the practice for the notion of social dramaturgy.

Family Portrait (A1.5) therefore is a key work in the sense that it marked a point in my methodology where my consideration of narrative in the process of the making work began to extend to thinking not about how works developed visually but instead how they behaved. While in earlier works I saw narrative connections evolve by juxtaposing image frames (*GeneMachine*) or symbolic content (*The Tailor* A1.4), or blending of images with others (*Tween* (A1.2)), in *Family Portrait* the work had a behaviour or action associated with it.

3.2.3 Creative methods: data-driven work

The video installation *Pulse* (A1.3), Figure 3.8, used similar scripting tools and processes to those used in *Tween* (A1.2) and *Family Portrait* (A1.5) the

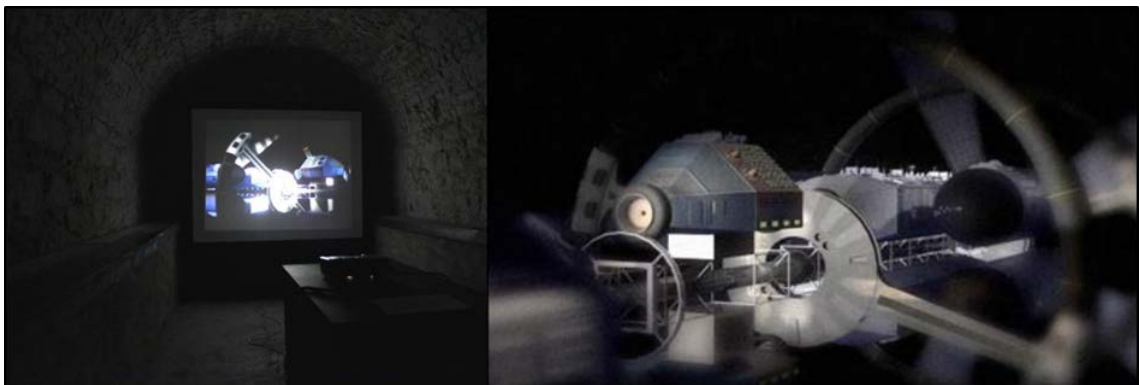


Figure 3.8 Video installation *Pulse* (Green, 2010)

speculative phase involved much more dialogic interaction with people who could supply expert information necessary to understanding the scientific content integral to the work. *Pulse* used scripts to read-in numeric data stored in text files

from the Blackrock Castle Observatory Labs⁷⁰ (BCO Labs) servers, and extract specific content using regular expressions (RegExp) functions. This data was then converted into variables which acted as key frames used to animated audio-visual content. When *Pulse* was exhibited in 2010 and 2012 the variables were used as to control the audio channel of a rendered 3D animation of a satellite station. The values extracted from the data were understood by the researchers at BCO Labs to be representative of pulses of energy emitted from a black hole (quasar) being studied by BCO Labs (located at coordinates 0716 714). In the narrative of the piece these pulses, of variable strength, could be understood as levels of threat to the station. Depending on the keyframe selected, the audio was designed to inject a different level of urgency into the animation.

Since the work was based on empirical scientific information that was beyond my understanding, it was necessary for me to engage in a dialogue with the researchers and have them talk about their research on a level that made sense to me. This involved several meetings with lengthy conversations where the technical language could be chipped away to get some sense of what was going on in the data. To support these exchanges, animation prototypes visualising the data were created. Figure 3.9 shows four frames from an animation generated from one column of values which measured the brightness of spots in images collected by BCO Labs. From these conversational exchanges augmented by animated

⁷⁰ Researchers at BCO Labs operate two robotic telescopes at Blackrock Castle Observatory and their work is focussed on developing and applying new instrumentation and technologies to support astronomy research. Their research field is related to Photonics which is described as the science of generating and harnessing light.

prototypes, it was possible to build a sense of the ‘causal events’ that one could imagine being triggered by the energy from the quasar. These were

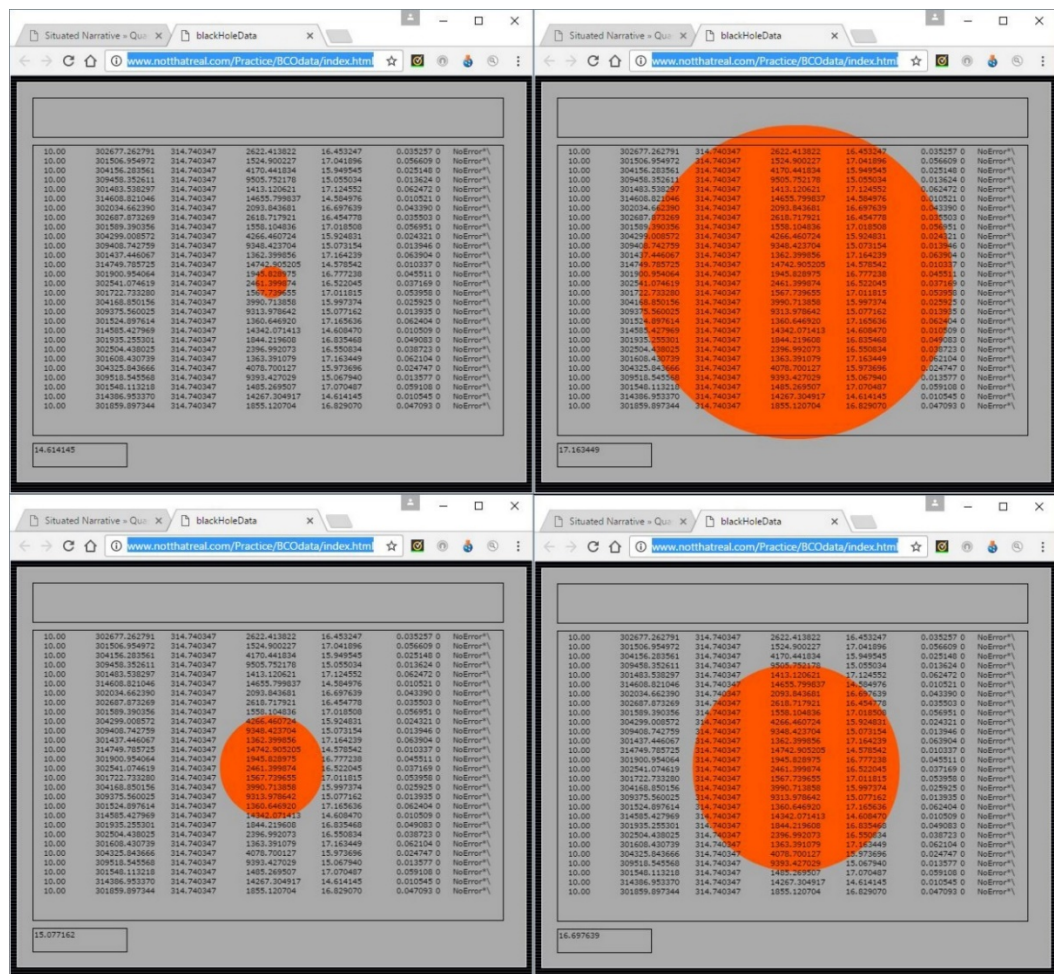


Figure 3.9 Animated visualisation of data for video installation *Pulse* (Green, 2010)

imagined by me as constituting variable levels of threat for those fictional possible characters who could have inhabited the space station presented in the video installation.

These conversational (dialogic) exchanges were also evident elsewhere in the practice. In relation to *Myths* this has already been mentioned, but in the curation of the Boundary Work exhibitions dialogue was a prominent method where collaboration with other practitioners and scientists was a significant part of the process of organising and selecting works. In the curation of Boundary Work I the

work conducted with BCO Labs was exhibited. Other examples include work by Dr. Aidan Coffey & Dr. Jim O'Mahony entitled *Lactobacillus Brevis Phage*⁷¹ was negotiated in detail before being developed into a narrative sequence of images to be displayed in the exhibition.

3.2.4 Creative methods: responsive work

The responsive works produced as part of the programme can be regarded in many ways as operating as probes and in some ways they followed on from what was observed in the making of *Family Portrait* (A1.5); that is, that works can be interesting in the behaviours they promote within an environment. I will describe some of the main methods associated with the development and presentation of three projects: *Probe* (A1.6); *Trails* (A1.7); and a *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* (A1.8). While *Probe* was intended as a piece to be exhibited in a public gallery space, each of the other two projects are regarded as experiments that looked at how an intervention in a space can impact, or not, on the way in which users of the space behave in response to the work.

In the first case *Probe* (A1.6) was a collaboration with artist Mark Cullen who of Pallas Studios and Gallery in Dublin, Ireland. Mark, along with three other artists - Wendy Judge, Gillian Lawler, and Jessica Foley – established a touring exhibition entitled *Difference Engine*. The exhibition is described as ‘an evolving touring exhibition’ and as the exhibition moves from venue to venue the group invite different artists to collaborate with them. *Probe* was the result of the

⁷¹ See Figure A2.5.1 and associated description in Appendix 2

collaboration related to the 2012 exhibition which was shown in the West Cork Arts Centre, in the south of Ireland.

In the case of *Probe* (A1.6), the work began with some meetings and conversations which were aimed at establishing what the work would be about and what roles we would assume in the creation of the piece. It was agreed that the work would be sculptural, and Mark was responsible for the physical design while I designed an electronic layer for the piece to enable visitors to interact with the work⁷². The theme of art and science was associated with *Difference Engine* which influenced the content of the work. The topic which dominated the conversation was of the *Voyager Golden Records* and the space probe which carried audio and visual material of earth, selected by Carl Sagan in 1977 for NASA, intended for any extra-terrestrial lifeforms that might be encountered. This in turn led to some considerations about *what* might happen *if* the probe returned. A *what if* approach is a speculative method in creative design and has been widely used and discussed by other by creative practitioners⁷³. While we did not employ *what if* consciously

⁷² See Figure A1.6.1 of section A1.6 in Appendix 1 for a schematic of *Probe*.

⁷³ For instance, Gareth Morris & Ulrike Stevens gave a presentation about their architectural practice entitled 'What if: projects' in the Narrative in Practice Symposium in London in 2013. Anthony Dunne also gave a presentation at the IxDA Interaction 12 Conference in Dublin in February 2012 which referenced such a method employed by practitioners in the Computer Related Design (CRA) Research Studio at the Royal College of Art. This focused on how creative practitioners could unfold imaginative alternative realities as part of an initial design phase; imagining possible scenarios that could be if 'such and such' conditions were true. 'What..if' scenarios are mostly hypothetical and are similar to another concept in narratology that Gerald Prince referred to as *disnarration*. Prince defined this as the 'elements in a narrative that explicitly consider and refer to what does not take place' as in 'X didn't happen' or 'Y could have happened but didn't' PRINCE, G. [1987] 2003. *A dictionary of narratology*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press..

as part of the process, it was obvious that this kind of narrative probing was going on through the conversational process that helped the design of what it was we would eventually construct for the exhibition. This process also bears some resemblance to how Ochs and Capps describe personal narratives: ‘the essential function of personal narrative – to air, probe, and otherwise attempt to reconstruct and make sense of actual and possible life experiences [...] Explanatory sequences in everyday personal narratives resemble scientific hypotheses’ (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.7).

The sculpture took on the *what if* possibility of a fictional probe that had returned from space. The content it contained included versions of the imagery and sounds selected by Carl Sagan and modified by Mark Cullen. From the perspective of my role in the project, the probe would also have the possibility to be responsive to the audience who came through the gallery. When people entered the section of the gallery where the work was on show, audio from the *Voyager Golden Records* was played from speakers embedded in the belly of the sculpture. As people approached the work they tended to be attracted by the reworked display of Sagan’s visual data from the 1977 NASA project which was animated through a 5-inch screen installed behind a lens (see Figure 3.12, centre and Figures A1.6.1 and A1.6.2) which made up part of the interface of the head of the sculpture (see Figure 4.12, left and Figures A1.6.1 and A1.6.2). The physical design of the piece guided visitors into an ideal viewing position. Once within a certain range the system activated an array of LEDs around the head of the sculpture and began tracking the position and proximity of the viewer to the interface. Using a

combination of camera, sensors, and face tracking software the viewer's position was monitored. When the viewer was at a set distance and appropriately framed, the camera captured an image of the viewer's face and stored it in a database on a computer connected to the sculpture through a USB serial connection. When people moved to the other end of the sculpture they were presented with a similar interface where they could see their own faces combined in with others who had previously viewed the work (see Figure 3.10, right).



Figure 3.10 Image showing (left) the input interface for Probe, (centre) reworked animated images from the Voyager Golden Record 1977, (right) images of viewers' faces integrated into a single image which constantly rebuild itself to include new data collected automatically by the sculpture.

Gleaning audience feedback from these situated works was not part of the methodology but it was possible observe and informally approach people in the space and get some sense of the experience they had. While most recognised themselves in the combined image others missed this completely. Many did not appear to understand the narrative behind the work, which was unsurprising to me, but were intrigued to unexpectedly see images of themselves integrated in the work. The fact that they became part of the work seemed to generate interest but what the work meant was largely inaccessible to most without getting further information from literature available in the gallery or by talking to us. It was clear the work in its final form and behaviour had limited entry points to enable a narrative experience by the viewing audience. However, reflecting across the

process of collaboration, the space probe narrative provided a structure for cooperation and demonstrated how narrative could serve the design process without necessarily being available as a story for the viewing public.

In addition to *Probe* (A1.6), other works were set up in public places to observe responses and see what people did in the space around the work. The first, to be introduced here is *Trails* (A1.7). This piece was located in the main corridor of the Berkeley IT Building in Cork Institute of Technology and consisted of three purpose built back-projection screens measuring approx. 5m long by 1m high. The work made use of two high definition (HD) cameras as inputs for motion detection within the space. The frames from these cameras were stitched together into a single video feed that was aligned with the area of the corridor directly in front of the screens. When people passed by the video feed from the cameras was monitored using a modified version of *Justin Windle's MotionTracker Class*⁷⁴ for ActionScript 3.0™. The tracked input produced two dimensional XY coordinates which were passed across a network connection to another computer hosting a particle system which produced a visual trail that followed people along the section of the corridor. The work was designed in such a way that if people paused in front of the work, the particles would grow in size to reveal an image behind. These were custom images which could also be scripted to run as a sequence like a slide show with an unfolding narrative. When one paused in front of the piece for a short time the particle system popped open into a wider circle to reveal a photographic

⁷⁴ See Justin Windle's website at <https://soulwire.co.uk/> His motion tracker class is available at http://www.downscripts.com/webcam-motion-tracking_flash-script.html

image people could explore (example in Figure 3.11). By walking slowly in front of the screens one could reveal elements in the image. If one moved too quickly the wider circle would collapse and the particle system would return to the behaviour of tracking your motion but hide the image from view.

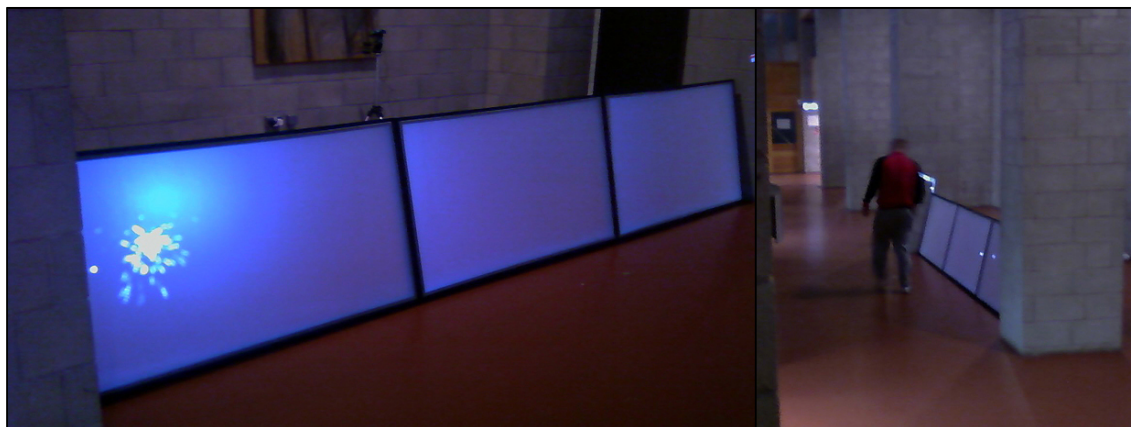


Figure 3.11 Setup of *Trails* (Green, 2011) in the Berkeley IT Building with three projectors and three custom back projection screens Screen dimensions (900mm x 4572mm)

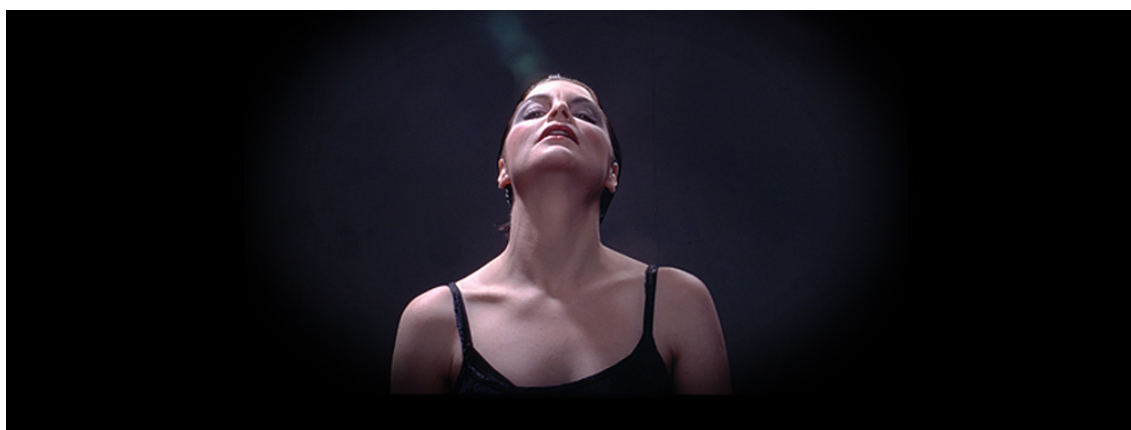


Figure 3.12 An example image revealed by interacting with the installation *Trails* (Green, 2011).

The idea here was to use the practice of building a work to consider how people might engage in a different kind of reading of the photographic image. By slowing down the reading process one could argue that ‘time’ was being added into the reception of what were essentially monophase images, or images organised in a sequence in time. This piece required a significant dedication of time to investigating the properties of the space in which the work would be tested. This

turned out to be less trivial than I had first imagined⁷⁵. Considerations included how people passing through the space would be confronted by the work and how much time they would have to register the presence of the work. The question of whether then they would have time to stop and engage with it. How populated the space might be was also a factor, as many passers-by may produce the self-conscious effect that Dalsgaard and Hansen (2008) recognised as a perception of public performance in front of an interface. With this work the intention was to reduce the possibility of this, so that people could be observed interacting with the work. There were therefore steps taken to evaluate alternative spaces before settling on the one in which the work was finally installed. The space also had to facilitated me making discreet observations of people passing through so that notes could be taken of the extent of their interaction. The methods in this case were close to what one would expect in qualitative research, particularly in HCI, were observations of users' behaviour help either improve a product or modify its design in some way. The outcomes of these observations will be discussed in the Chapter 5.

A second approach that utilised design work to observe people in public spaces was an installation of a small-scale hidden video screen in Cork City Gaol. This work took an altogether different approach to narrative in space. The work conducted in Cork City Gaol was distinct from previous works in the sense that that it deliberately set out to ask questions about narrative within the visitor centre. While earlier works, such as *Myths* (A1.1) or *The Tailor* (A1.4), were valuable as

⁷⁵ See Appendix 1a for an investigation of spaces prior to the development of this work

artistic data which could be reflected on later, they were clearly works using methods associated with a tradition of fine art studio practice. In the same way we do not refer to art as ‘useful’, or think of interactive art typically in terms of ‘usability’, the works described previously were not developed to resolve problems in a way we often think about the function of design. These works were made for their own sake, yet in making the work there was a consciousness about how narrative could be later identified in, or related to, them.

The *Narrative Intervention at Cork City Gaol* (A1.8), described in detail in Appendix 1 section A1.8, was different in its method in the sense that it set out with a specific goal to establish how narrative was made use of by the curators of the visitor centre. The investigation began with activities which included informal dialogue with staff at the centre, taking the guided tour, making use of available media, such as the printed booklets provided to the public. There was also an audio guide which prescribed a path around the space punctuated with narrative content about past inmates. Having gained familiarity with the architectural layout and the story the centre was communicating, it was decided to conduct some observations of how people tended to move within the space. It was obvious that different visitors would have different constraints depending on whether they were visiting on their own, as a couple, in family groups, and so on. For instance, parents often followed young children who seemed to be guided by whatever attracted them in the space rather than following any path prescribed by the audio tour or other narrative material. Cork City Gaol allows for an open visit where the public can wander around in any direction they wish.

With respect to the media used to assist the visit three obvious categories of visitor were possible to discern. There were those visitors who paid for the audio tour, those who used the free printed material, and those who simply entered and wandered around looking at the exhibits and reading from available information panels. After spending considerable time in the gaol over several weeks, a question came to the surface around how the visitors' journey through the building may be constrained by the narratives provided by the exhibition design. After some consideration of the visitors, those who made use of the audio tour seemed to be the most appropriate to target for the study. This was based on the audio tour being quite instructive about managing the visitors' route from cell to cell where short accounts about the various historical figures and inmates were presented. A key benefit of selecting the user of the audio tour was that one could observe the visitors' movements in the space while also observing to what extent they adhered to the order of the stories presented on the audio player. Having consulted the interface on the MP3 audio players it was clear that the device made it difficult to skip back or forward through the content. It therefore seemed very unlikely the visitor would not follow the audio in the order it was presented to them on the media player.

Having decided on the audio tourist as a visitor category to study, the first step in the method was to become intimate with the content on the audio. To do this, the full content of the audio was imported into Nvivo and transcribed. A copy of the transcription is available in Appendix 3a. Having transcribed the audio it was then coded into classes of discourse. The discourse was categorised into four classes of

content: *Descriptive*, *Evaluative*, *Instructive*, and *Narrative* (see Figure 3.13).

Descriptive content related to the visitor's attention being focused, by the

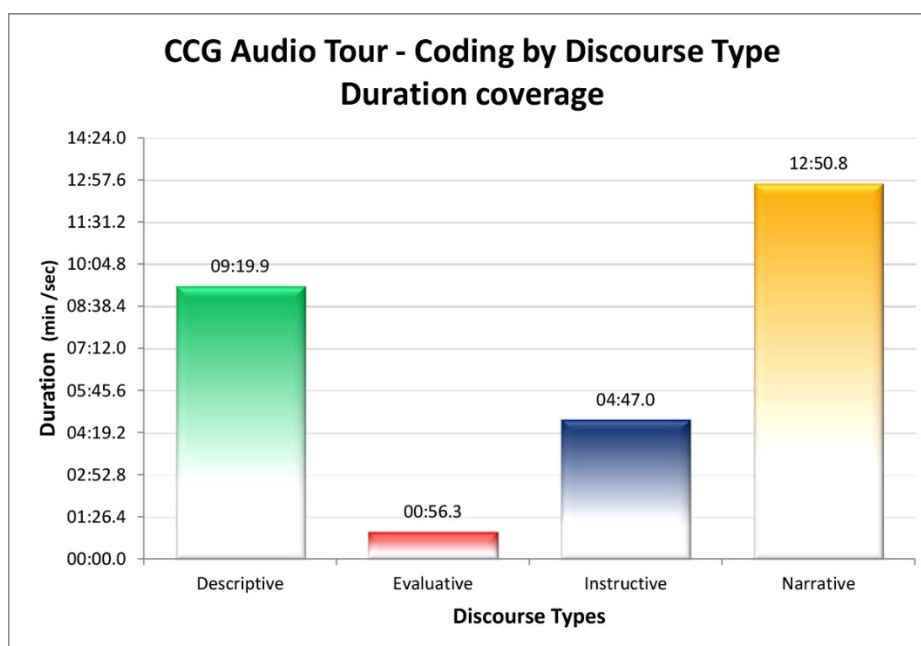


Figure 3.13 Coding of Discourse Type from study in Cork City Gaol (Green, 2012). The chart shows the distribution of the audio content in terms of its discourse types.

narrator, on the architectural or outdoor environment. While ‘description’ is part of narrative - a description of the world in which a story takes place can be integral to the setting plot for example - it was nevertheless useful to separate it from narrative content since the description in this case pointed to specific places in the visit where people would be paused to look at the surrounding environment. *Descriptive* content was therefore useful to mark, since one could observe visitors physically in the space and determine from their activity if they were still attentive to the audio content at that point in their journey. Using a diagram of the floor plan it was possible to index the visitors’ position in the space with the time code on the audio timeline (Figure 3.15). *Evaluative discourse* was where the narrator made judgments about the information in the discourse. *Instructive discourse* provided practical pointers to visitors about when and where to move, or when they were in

position to start the next section of the audio. *Narrative* discourse was where short stories were provided about the characters who had inhabited the gaol, including inmates, guards, medical staff, or the Governor. *Narrative discourse* was important to identify, as these were places on the tour where people were engaged and their attention held until the stories were complete. Figure 3.14 shows where the various discourse types

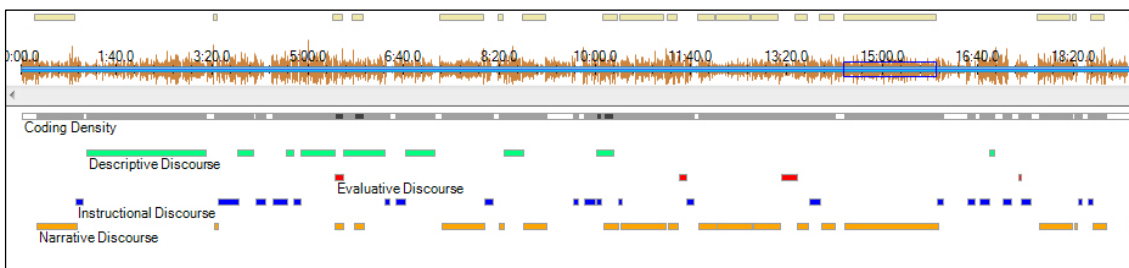


Figure 3.14 Coding of Discourse Type from study in Cork City Gaol (Green, 2012). The chart shows the discourse types distributed along a section of the audio timeline.

are distributed along a section of the audio timeline. Based on observations in the space it was clear that people became distracted from the content at various points in their journey and began to explore the space more openly. By observing the visitor behaviour, as well as in the distribution of discourse in the audio, it was possible to determine places in the gaol where people were likely to ‘drift’ from the prescribed content, to ponder or explore the space more openly. These are spots which I have referred to as ‘narrative holes’ and possibly well suited for placing interventions that would introduce a level of surprise, or unexpectedness, in to the space. The floor plan in Figure 3.15 shows the identification of one such spot (C5R) in the gaol which became a site for a designed intervention. The

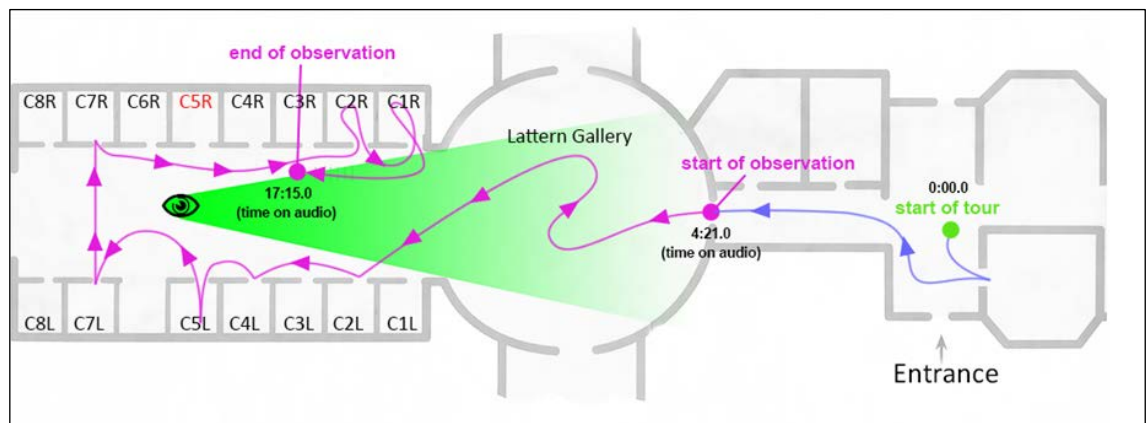


Figure 3.15 Study of space in Cork City Gaol which identified the fifth cell on the right (C5R) as a potential site for a narrative intervention.

intervention that was introduced seemed to have a positive impact on the visitors who discovered it; and rather than filling up the space with narrative, from which they had already become fatigued, the intervention appeared to promote a sense of discovery and play. A full description of the intervention is provided in Appendix 1, section A1.8. A discussion of the work is also addressed in Chapter 4.

The methodology employed in this last example here should be understood as being less about the presence of narrative in the piece, the artwork or intervention, and more about the how narrative was functioning in the surrounding space. The environment of the Berkeley Building in Cork Institute of Technology, a place one passed-through to get somewhere, seemed unsympathetic to engagement with largescale highly visible interactive work. The heritage centre on the other hand functioned differently as a social space and the small-scale intervention, hidden behind a spyhole in one of the cell doors, appear to reward visitors for their willingness to explore in a place already saturated with narrative.

Observations conducted later in other museums and exhibition centres threw some additional light on these issues⁷⁶.

Taken together the above examples of work produced as part of the research study demonstrates narrative is present and important to the practice. These will be enumerated and discussed in the following chapter but for the moment it should be recognised that some are already supported by existing approaches to narrative in the literature and others largely unsupported. The narrative framework is intended organise what appear to be disparate approaches into a set of classes which make the communication of narrative in creative practice more easily to elucidate. The chapter will now move to explain the research methodology applied in the wider field beyond my practice where narrative was explored in terms of its usage in language associated with art and practice.

3.3 Thematic Analysis

As the research progressed to examine how narrative was used in the language around art practice Nvivo became a valuable supporting tool. It made possible the analysis of how narrative was employed in a broad range of material from formal academic documents to exhibition reviews and other articles in periodicals and public media. In this research activity Thematic Analysis (TA) was employed not to seek specific definitions of narrative in the arts or necessarily identify narrative

⁷⁶ For example, museums that used chronological and narrative timelines as a dominant strategy for presenting their content, arguably produced visitor experiences which eroded the interest of the visitor well before their journey through the space was complete. Appendix 3b contains an extract from the 54-page report of the survey, as it related specifically to narrative. The full report was presented at the National Gallery of Ireland in March 2015. Appendices 6.5a and 6.5b contain information related to the presentation.

artists from non-narrative artists or artworks. Since the position underpinning the research project is that human beings are *homo narrans* then narrative should probably show up in some form for all creative practitioners⁷⁷. As such the review of material described in this section is necessarily broad and was focussed on finding patterns in the use of narrative in language. In this way it was possible to get a general sense of how narrative was meaningful. This general sense could then be crossed with the more specific application I recognised in my own work. Before dealing directly with the data I will first provide an introduction to TA.

TA is described as a method of ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns in data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.79). It is widely used within qualitative research in the social sciences although Braun and Clarke have noted that it is rarely recognised in the way Grounded Theory (GT) or Narrative Analysis (NA) are ‘named’. They argue that TA should be regarded as a method distinct from others that use similar processes for identifying and coding data patterns in information. A primary distinction they make between thematic analysis and other similar methods - such as conversational analysis (CA), discourse analysis (DA), interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), or GT - is that TA is not tethered to any particular theoretical or epistemological framework. While for example IPA ‘assumes an epistemological stance whereby, through careful and explicit

⁷⁷ In chapter 2 I provided the argument for a biological basis for narrative. Walter Fisher has proposed a theory of human communication based on the idea that people as *homo narrans*. See FISHER, W. R. 1984. Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communication Monographs*, 51, 1-22. This was also recognised in the introduction to narrative in the 2013 NIP Symposium handbook. See HADJILOUCA, D., HONIBALL, N. & NAGASAWA, Y. NIP 2013 Creative Symposium (Handbook). In: NINA HONIBALL, D. H., ed. NIP 2013 Creative Symposium, 21 May 2011 2013 Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design. Hato Press, 18.

interpretative methodology, it becomes possible to access an individual's cognitive inner world' (Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008), TA is free of any assumptions about what the researcher may be attempting to do.

Through its theoretical freedom thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data. (Braun and Clarke, p. 78)

From my perspective, there were different types of data produced and collected as part of the research. In this section I am referring to material gathered information from Google Alerts; interpretive information obtained directly from studies of interpretations of images, and interviews and surveys. Therefore, the flexibility inherent to TA when combined with Nvivo made it suitable as a method for identifying patterns while providing a robust and structured approach to explore the material and identify contexts of use for narrative in the collected documents.

While TA affords a high level of flexibility that makes it suitable for moving between different domains of study some precautions are necessary. Braun and Clarke insist that 'clarity around the process and the practice of the method' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.80) is essential in order to protect the credibility of the research. They identified three issues that could potentially undermine the validity of research using the method. First, there is the tendency to provide insufficient reporting on the methodological process. Where this is the case the subjectivity of the researcher can be called into question due to a lack of detail around what steps were taken in the research process and in what order. Secondly, the theoretical position of the researcher relative to the data can be unclear or assumed. In this

case themes have sometimes been characterised as residing in the data and simply waiting to be revealed by the ‘passive’ researcher. This ‘naïve realist’ perspective is one to which Braun and Clarke do not subscribe. While they intend to install TA with a higher level of objectivity, they continue to recognise the sensitivity of the researcher towards certain themes over others which is a necessary feature of all qualitative research. Finally, they note that the theoretical framework used by the researcher should match the method. Their observation was that much of the time there is a lack of clarity around the application of TA which often results in a loss of transparency around the research process.

Having observed these issues, they proposed a detailed description of the method in six phases which starts with the collection of data and ends with the reporting of findings and discussion. In short the six phases of analysis are summarised by them as follows:

- Phase 1: familiarising yourself with your data;
- Phase 2: generating initial codes;
- Phase 3: searching for themes;
- Phase 4: reviewing themes;
- Phase 5: naming themes;
- Phase 6: producing the report.

When TA was employed in this research project it followed these phases and the process is described in the following sub-section.

3.3.1 TA phases in the analysis of narrative in the language about art

Based on my own practice I had certain assumptions about what narrative is, and from my experience of speaking with other practitioners it seemed that the term was used quite casually. There is the suspicion that this is largely unproblematic for practitioners since, certainly in the case of fine artists, they seldom wish to reduce their work to narrow, or quickly accessible, meanings; which of course narrative facilitates well in education⁷⁸. However, from an academic perspective, it is necessary to account properly for how narrative enters one's practice if it is being presented as research. While Elkins may have some authority to say that narrative is as dead as it can get for the contemporary visual artist this is a view not shared by those contributing to the Narrative in Practice Symposium in London (2011, 2013). So, if narrative can be regarded as relevant to practice, the question is how then does it get expressed in language around artistic practices. To address this question data was gathered for analysis using a number of different strategies.

One method used was to set up a number of 'Google Alerts' to generate links to online articles. This was started in February 2012 and the collection of information is ongoing. A sample of this data was taken over a period of two years up to November 2015. The analysis focused on how the term 'narrative' was found in articles returned on searches using the phrases 'narrative and art' and 'contemporary narrative art'. This method returned content from mostly non-

⁷⁸ Narrative and learning are often coupled in constructivist approaches to education. Narrative technology and learning are explored in a book of papers entitled DETTORI, G., GIANNETTI, T., PAIVA, A. & VAZ, A. (eds.) 2006. *Technology-mediated narrative environments for learning*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. Many of the examples use narrative theory as a basis for design projects focussed supporting learning through games or other narrative media.

academic sources. Typically, these were from exhibition reviews, gallery and museum literature, and various kinds of promotional material. It provided a significant amount of textual and visual data where narrative was used to describe some aspect of a work or body of work in question. A second method employed was to conduct a broad search using academic research tools such as ProQuest to target relevant material across a range of different academic databases. Source material was also gleaned through the ACM portal, which included art and design projects categorised under interactivity. Thirdly, specific journals such as Leonardo and Narrative & Image were targeted, as well as available information from the proceedings of seminars and conferences such as Narrative in Practice (2011, 2013), and the International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA). Other sources searched included mailing lists for the International Society for the Study of Narrative (ISSN) which I am a member. The data set drawn from the ProQuest database, ACM, Leonardo Journal, Narrative & Image Journal, and the articles recovered from the Google Alerts accumulated 5,120 discrete articles. In addition, there were the 3036 pages of the available ISEA proceedings and catalogues from 1990 to 2012; and 2003 pages of email exchanges in the ISSN mailing list. These sources incorporated accounts of works that were developed using traditional artistic methods and media, and more recent practices that incorporated new technologies and electronic art. The data set was therefore relatively large in terms of the number of sources, but also suitably broad, in terms the range of practices represented.

Phase one of the analysis was complete when the resources were collected into a set of local directories on my computer, formatted appropriately for the analysis, and imported into Nvivo with initial coding to identify the sources and mark the sections in the documents where the term ‘narrative’ was used. This initial coding was at first ‘narrow’ but was then extended so the surrounding context of the term could be quickly captured.

The process of gathering the information from the various sources was in some cases partially automated; in other cases, it was cumbersome and protracted. For instance, the articles collected through Google Alerts had to be printed to a PDF format before being imported into Nvivo. Since the alerts in many cases were delivered as a list of website links in a single email, each of the websites had to be manually visited before they could be saved as PDFs. The text in each of these 834 articles had then to be converted using optical character recognition (OCR) using Adobe Acrobat™ before being useful with Nvivo. In the case of Leonardo, it was possible to search articles from 2001 that used the term narrative. There were 1180 articles returned and could be download in groups of 20 citations at a time. These were then passes through EndNote™ which extracted the abstracts and PDF versions of full articles, where they were available.

Within Nvivo I set up a new Node directory for each of the phases from 1 through to 5 so that the process of coding could be traced back through each of the steps. This was done to comply with Braun and Clarke’s recommendation for research transparency. Figure 3.16 shows a screenshot of the project in Nvivo with the Leonardo directory selected. Each source directory (the one for Leonardo is

highlighted in Figure 3.16) held the coding for phases 1 and 2. Figure 3.17 provides an example of the codes derived from articles collected through the Google Alerts. A new directory was created for each of the phases 3, 4 and 5. Phase six of the TA process, as described by Braun and Clarke, corresponds to the write-up of the findings and the discussion. Phase 6 therefore occurs outside Nvivo and is found in the following two chapters of this thesis.

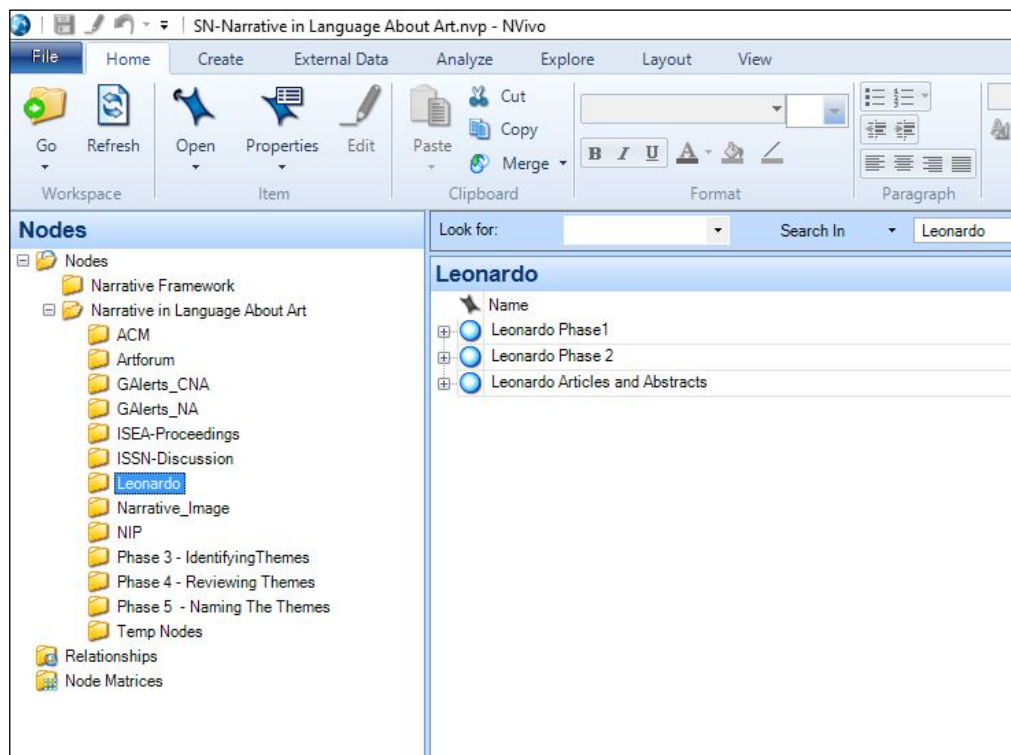


Figure 3.16 Screenshot of Nvivo interface with the Leonardo directory selected.

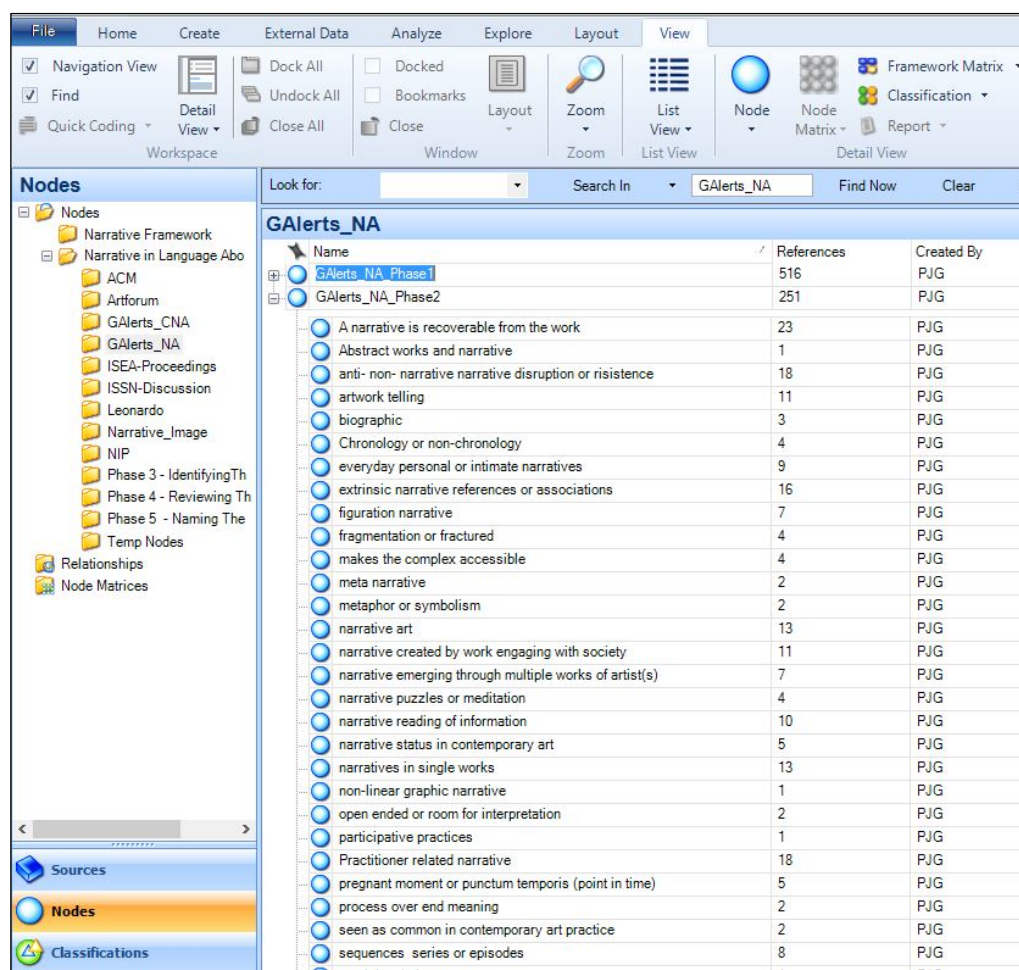


Figure 3.17 Illustration of thematic analysis at Phase 2. Initial codes were applied to the use of narrative in the sources. In this figure the codes were derived from articles collected through the Google Alerts.

Each of next phases can be more easily described as they constitute a process of distilling the source references into broad initial themes, before then revising them, and finally naming them. What comes from this is a broad set of abstract categories which have been derived from the data. No matter how abstract the top level is, it is possible to move back down to instances in the data so that clear examples can be provided of the top-level categories. Table 3.1 shows how the themes were altered through Phase 3 to 5.

Thematic Analysis - Phases 3 through to 5		
Phase 3 - Identifying Themes	Sources	References
001 Narrative In The Work	77	193
002 Narrative Resistance or Rejection	43	136
003 Extrinsic References or Associations	37	70
004 Intentionality	32	80
005 Narrative Techniques	43	136
006 Character Centred	8	13
007 Practitioner Centred	36	140
008 Small Stories and Big Stories	26	45
009 Curatorial or Institutional	31	57
010 Interpretation or Reception	20	99
011 Narrative Function	12	15
012 Social	8	9
013 Narratology	17	123
014 Computationally Tractable	37	71
Phase 4 - Reviewing Themes	Sources	References
(A) Understood as a constituent of the work	90	298
(B) Understood as being denied in the work	55	136
(C) Understood as being about something related by the work	20	30
(D) Understood as being used by someone who talks about the work	2	3
Phase 5 - Naming Themes	Sources	References
(A) DIRECT (Discourse)	87	288
(B) INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance)	52	130
(C) INTENTIONAL (Topical)	2	3
(D) PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View)	30	35

Table 3.1 Themes from Phase 3 to 5. The themes from Phase 3 were organised into higher level categories at Phase 4. This process involved checking back down to the individual data to ensure the higher-level categories continued to properly apply. Phase 5 top level categories were named as (A) DIRECT (Discourse); (B) INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance); (C) INTENTIONAL (Topical); (D) PERSPECTIVAL (Point-of-View).

The four categories listed under Phase 4 incorporated the themes identified at Phase 3. Phase 5 involved reviewing and naming these themes. For example, to make use of the term *DIRECT* in relation to a work of art would be to say that narrative was perceived, by the author of the document, to be a property directly accessible in the physical work. To use *INDIRECT* is where narrative is rejected, fractured, or only partially revealed. Statements that describe works as anti-narrative indirectly address narrative by seeking to avoid it. The term *INTENTIONAL* refers to topical uses of narrative; that is, what the work is about.

Examples of narrative used in exhibition material in an *INTENTIONAL* are statements such as ‘the grand narrative of black history’; or describing work ‘as infused with the narrative of civil-war-torn Colombia’. To employ the term *PERSPECTIVAL* on the other hand will identify a use of narrative from a point-of-view. This could be a curatorial or institutional perspective, the interpretive perspective of an audience, or a practitioner centred perspective. A curatorial perspective could be rendered as the life story of an artist. The category of *DIRECT* references works that may be traditionally referred to as ‘narrative works’ (such as the examples of pictorial narrative discussed in the literature review) while all other categories will address works that may or may not be regarded as narrative works.

The process of coding the volume of data was time consuming, but no different to the way this aspect of qualitative research might be conducted without software. The benefit of Nvivo came when the coding was structured. It was possible to generate queries to extract patterns in the source material. While this normally works very well for interview material prepared manually by the researcher using word processing tools before being imported into Nvivo, there were some restrictions with the process I used. A frustrating problem emerged during the OCR conversion of the source files where some of the textual data got scrambled; not in its visual appearance but in the order the words and paragraphs were converted into continuous text. While it was still possible to code these data using ‘Region Selection’ options in Nvivo, much of the power the software had for processing textual content became redundant. Because of the typesetting in older publications,

these were more prone to this problem and so material, such as the 1988 ISEA Proceedings, were not included for analysis.

Figure 3.18 demonstrates an example of how it was possible to get some quantitative sense of how various publications referenced narrative. Without paying close attention to the specific coding the quantitative information had limited value. The number references illustrated in Figure 3.18 are the result of applying filters to the search. So, while the research in Art Forum returned over

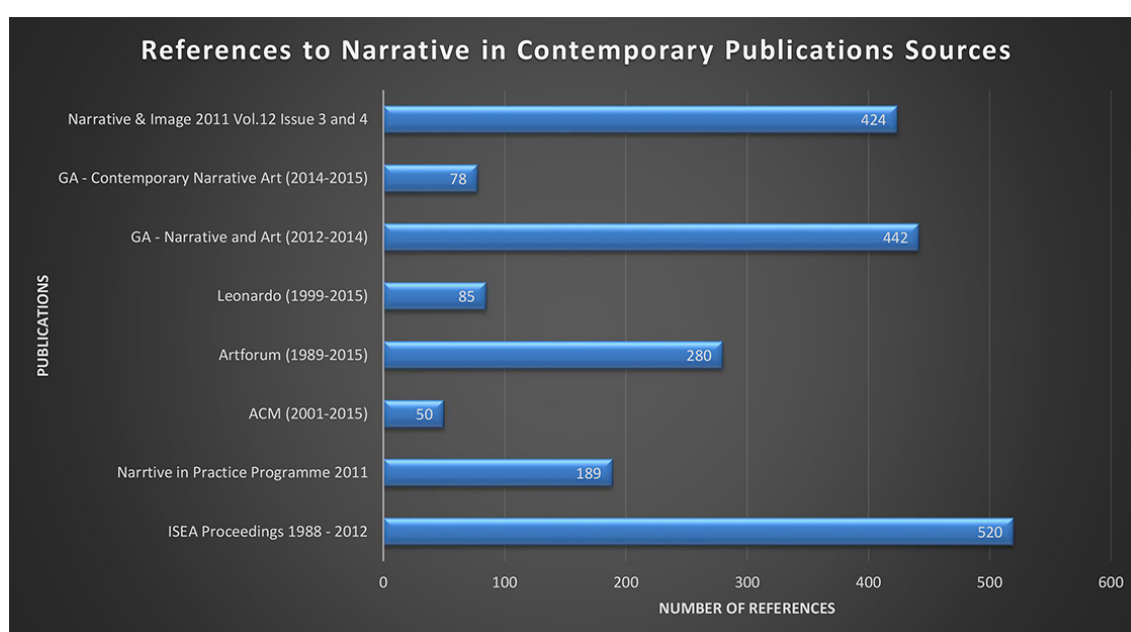


Figure 3.18 Chart showing how visualising the coding as it developed it was possible to compare the amount of reference found in the various sources.

3041 results many of these uses related to books, book reviews, literary texts, or mainstream film, which were deemed to be outside of my scope of interest. The 280 codes in the chart therefore indicates the number that were relevant. Whether these were interesting in any way to the study was another issue. Different questions or queries however could be raised in relation to what was discovered in each of these publications or sources of data. So, for instance, the search of the Narrative in Practice Programme for 2011 caught 189 uses of narrative, all of

which would be relevant; however, some questions could be raised about how the formality of these uses of the term, or if they linked with existing concepts developed in narratology.

A more detailed discussion of the coding, and the significance of the patterns found in the source data, will be discussed in Chapter 4.

3.3.2 Online survey of practitioners

The online survey of practitioners was developed in Survey Monkey and derived from standardised questions designed to avoid biased or leading responses⁷⁹. The survey was tested separately with two individual artists, and a group of 6 practitioners. Minor modifications were made before I circulated it to a wider group.

Questions 1 to 4 gathered information about the practitioners' field of practice, use of media, their specialism, and level of education, using 'closed' questions so the effort on their part would be kept to a minimum. Questions 5 to 9 also used closed and focused on narrative in their work or practice. Questions 10 to 12 inclusive, became more technical with matrix rating scale questions, using Likert scales, to try and get at an understanding they might have in relation to what narrative might be in relation to their work.

In qualitative research questionnaires are generally regarded as having limited value. Nevertheless, it was intended that the responses would be considered in

⁷⁹ A copy of the survey with responses is provided in Appendix 4.

relation to the other data collected and analysed in Nvivo, and therefore provide another perspective in addition to the other data collected and coded. This added more information in the sense of identifying the manner in which practitioners tended to make use of the term; and to what extent their understanding of narrative could be considered formal or otherwise. A total of 44 responses were collected and the results from the questionnaire will be discussed in Chapter 4 in the wider context of the outcomes from the various data described earlier.

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I outlined the research activities by linking them to the research questions raised at the outset of the thesis. The questions asked if narrative is valued in contemporary art practice? If it is valued, then where is there evidence of that and how might narrative in contemporary practice be described? These questions then point to the central research question which asked how the creative arts researcher defending their position on narrative could be supported in contributing to scholarship in the arts, and consequently to the study of narrative in general. The methodology is in sympathy with a theoretical position which views narrative to be a basic mode of human thought and sense-making. It is one that facilitates sense-making strategies in the interpretation of visual or literary art, but also allows us to grapple with everyday situations that present themselves as unusual or unexpected.

In responding to the questions, it was reiterated that creative practice was of central importance. As such I outlined the practical activities conducted as part of the research programme. The creation of work was divided into four categories:

manually-composed work; *auto-composed* work; *data-driven* work; and *responsive* work. The presentation of these approaches showed how narrative could be activated in diverse ways, some of which were already accounted for in the interpretation of works described as pictorial narrative and reviewed in the previous chapter. For instance, examples of *manually-composed* work and *auto-composed* work could make use of strategies used already by art historians in the interpretation of visual content. However other approaches produced work that requires an extended view of narrative in contemporary art practice to be developed. The way in which narrative was employed in the *Narrative Intervention at Cork City Gaol* (A1.8) is an example where the narrative strategy is either unavailable or ill-supported in the existing literature as it relates to narrative in art practice. This extended perspective, which includes the practitioner's own point-of-view, can be facilitated with the assistance of knowledge from disciplines not normally regarded as cognate to studio practice. These were introduced in literature and practice review in sections 2.4 and 2.5. The creative practice illustrated in this chapter throughout section 3.2 was presented as a method by which narrative could be brought to the surface through the approaches reviewed. A discussion focused more on the narrative effects uncovered through these approaches is addressed in the following chapter.

Using my work as a case to demonstrate the ways in which narrative can be relevant in creative practice was important, however it does not indicate any general importance of narrative in the work of others. As such it was necessary to glean some sense of how narrative was valued by the wider field as it is relevant

to creative practice. Part of this was already evident from the literature review but a wider survey of the field was required. To do this, a data set was gathered from periodicals, journal articles, exhibition reviews and interviews, symposium and conference papers, in addition to a survey of practitioners and study of how they interpreted a selection of visual imagery. Thematic Analysis was described as a methodology which was employed to analyse this material where Nvivo was used to help deal with the volume and variety of the sources. From this it was possible to identify some patterns in the way narrative was used and understood in relation to creative practice. It was possible through the phases of TA to isolate some preliminary categories of usage which were named *DIRECT*, *INDIRECT*, *INTENTIONAL*, and *PERSPECTIVAL*. While this survey gave some sense of how narrative is used in language around art the survey of practitioners indicated a general attitude towards narrative as it related to their own knowledge and to their practice.

While this chapter has focused mainly on describing the methods used in this investigation, Chapter 4 will explore in detail some of the finding that emerged from these activities.

Chapter 4 – Findings and discussion

4.1. Overview

The primary research as it was described in the previous chapter was guided by questions about whether narrative was relevant to contemporary art practice and if so, where was the evidence of that available? If there was evidence to be found, then how could it be described? The primary research was divided into two discreet methodologies. Firstly, there was the creative practice demonstrated in the body of work presented mostly in Appendix 1, with references also to events in Appendix 2. Secondly there was the qualitative work done, which included a survey of practitioners' understanding and attitudes to narrative, and an analysis of a data set of articles where narrative was used in the discussion of art. The articles for analysis came from academic and non-academic sources gathered using Google Alerts as well as searches targeting Artforum, ISEA Proceedings, Leonardo, Narrative & Image in addition to statements in the handbooks for the Narrative in Practice Symposium 2011 and 2013. The qualitative approaches aimed to establish some patterns about how narrative was employed and understood in relation to contemporary practice. The practical work on the other hand reflected my thinking about narrative in terms of how it is surfaced in my work. As such, the two methods complimented each other by allowing me to speak about my specific experience within the context of a wider set of patterns relating to how narrative in practice was discussed by the field in general.

In this chapter the findings in relation to both the creative practice and qualitative work are discussed and to do this the chapter is divided into three sections. The discussion of the survey of practitioners is presented in section 4.2 and serves to counter the view that there is an absence of interest in narrative by practitioners. While doing this it also uncovers some weaknesses in how narrative is understood and articulated. Following this, in Section 4.3, the findings from the survey of documents are divided into four major themes which characterise the use of narrative as it is applied in the discussion of art. These themes were generated from the Thematic Analysis (TA) conducted over five phases as describe in the previous chapter and are named: (A) NU-DIRECT (Discourse); (B) NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance); (C) NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical); and (D) NU-PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View). In the discussion of these categories of use, I provide examples from the data set, but also integrate my own practice to help clarifying the categories. In this way, the outcomes of the research as a whole are shown to result from a combination of the creative and qualitative methods. In addition, these categories provide in part a basis for the orientations of the narrative framework described in the next chapter. In Section 4.4, the discussion picks up the thread from the survey of practitioners about the perceived weaknesses in the articulation of narrative concepts. The discussion in this section reviews the use of language in both academic and non-academic sources to illustrate the level of formality associated with the discussion of narrative in the source material. The level of formality was found to be variable. On the one hand it appeared uncommon for artists, and indeed many commentators on art, to cite supporting concepts developed through the study of narrative. Nevertheless, there were examples found

which could be traced to theoretical influences in literature and social science. Finally, in section 4.5, the chapter is summarised with an account of some of the shortcomings in the way narrative is understood currently with regard to contemporary creative practice. There were also some gaps in how I perceived narrative to be at play in my work which are identified for attention in the follow chapter which describes the framework.

4.2 Practitioners attitude to and knowledge of narrative

I will start with discussing the online survey of practitioners which produced the most general of outcomes but was useful exercise in that it provided some insight to practitioners' attitudes to and knowledge of narrative. These are described here with charts illustrating responses to the key questions. The survey was entitled *Narrative in Creative Arts Practice* and there were 44 candidates from different disciplines in art and design who completed the questionnaire⁸⁰.

The survey first sought to establish some profile of the professional status of the practitioners who participated in the survey. Figure 4.1 provides a summary visualisation of the data returned in charts representing question 1 through to 5. From the responses 40 had achieved a Bachelor of Arts degree, 2 completed a Master of Arts Degree, and one had a PhD. Of the 40 candidates who had a Bachelor of Arts degree eight were registered on a Master of Arts programme but had not yet graduated with an award at that level. All participants, except one who declared to be self-taught, had therefore completed formal education in a field of

⁸⁰ The survey, introduced in the Chapter 3, is presented with a summary of the results in Appendix 4.

creative practice. The field of practice, and the practitioners' preferred media are indicated in the responses provided to questions 1, 3, and 4; the responses show a relatively diverse mix.

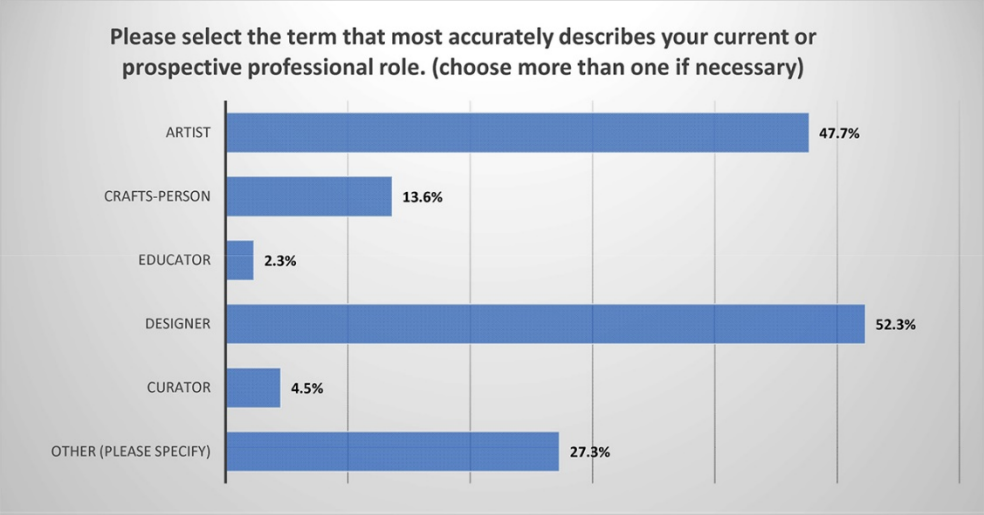


Figure 4.1 Chart representing the responses returned to question 1 from the survey entitled ‘Narrative in Creative Arts Practice’

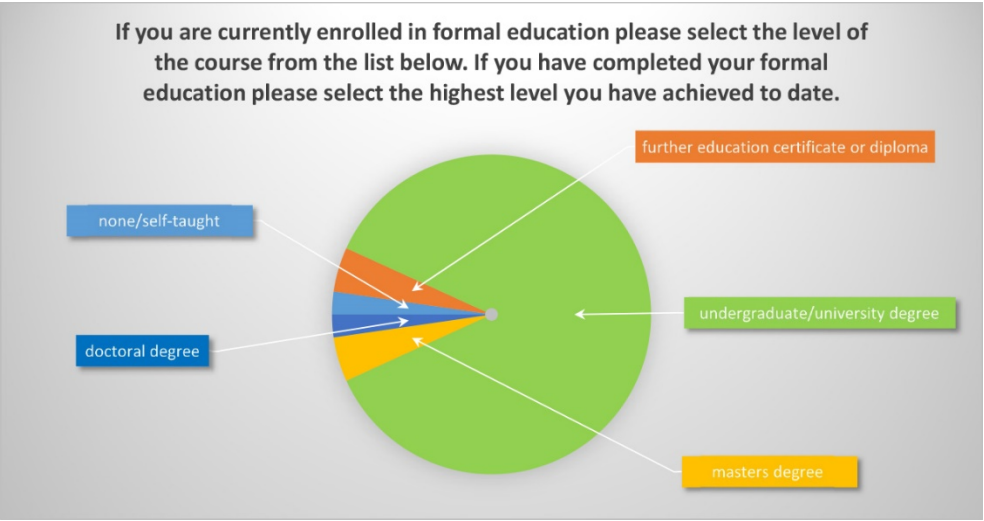


Figure 4.2 Chart representing the responses returned to question 2 from the survey entitled ‘Narrative in Creative Arts Practice’

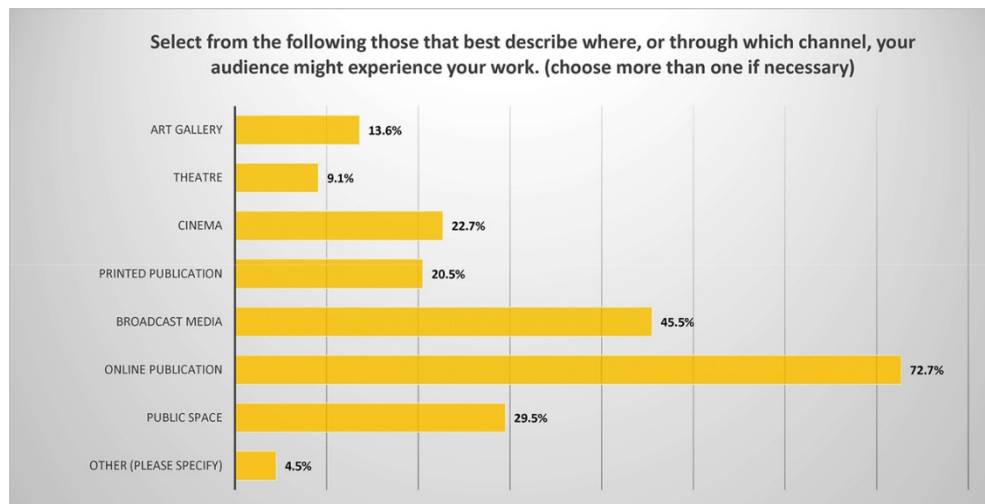


Figure 4.3 Chart representing the responses returned to question 3 from the survey entitled 'Narrative in Creative Arts Practice'

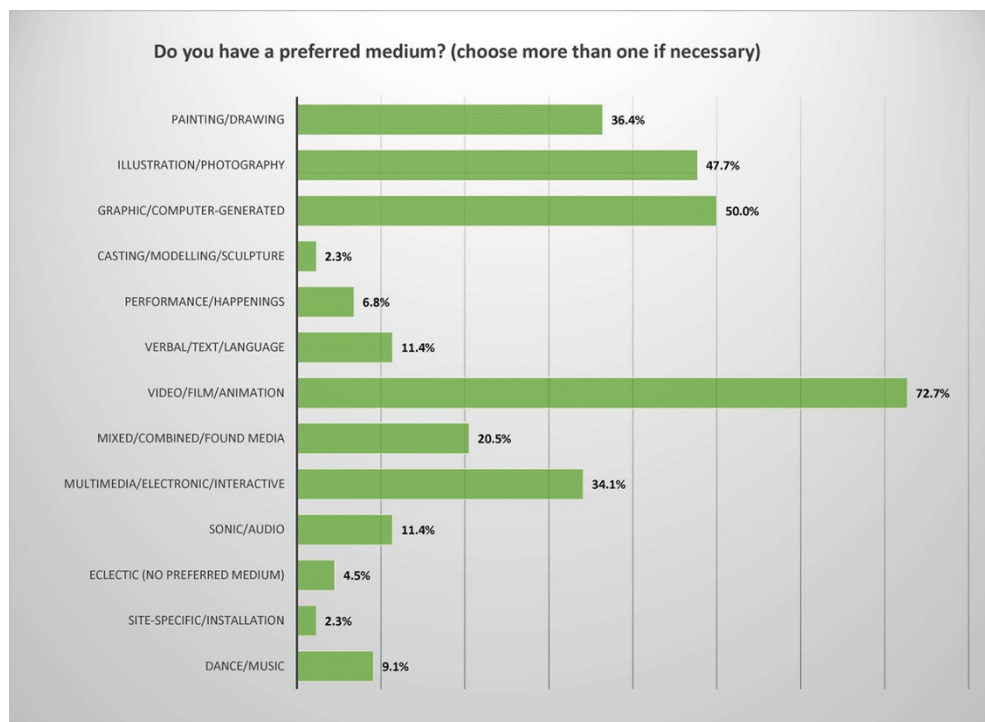


Figure 4.4 Chart representing the responses returned to question 4 from the survey entitled 'Narrative in Creative Arts Practice'

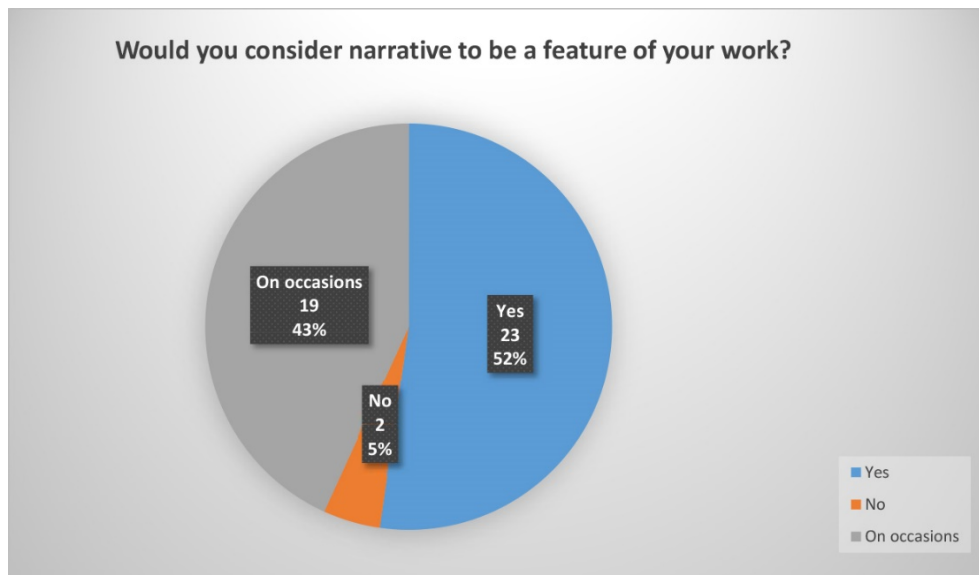


Figure 4.5 Chart representing the responses returned to question 5 from the survey entitled ‘Narrative in Creative Arts Practice’

Despite the diversity of creative practices declared by the participants there was a significant portion who signalled narrative to be feature of their work. All, except 2 candidates, chose an option indicating narrative to be a feature of their work, either on occasions or more frequently. When one examines the responses to the second part of the survey, which focussed on the kind of knowledge of narrative

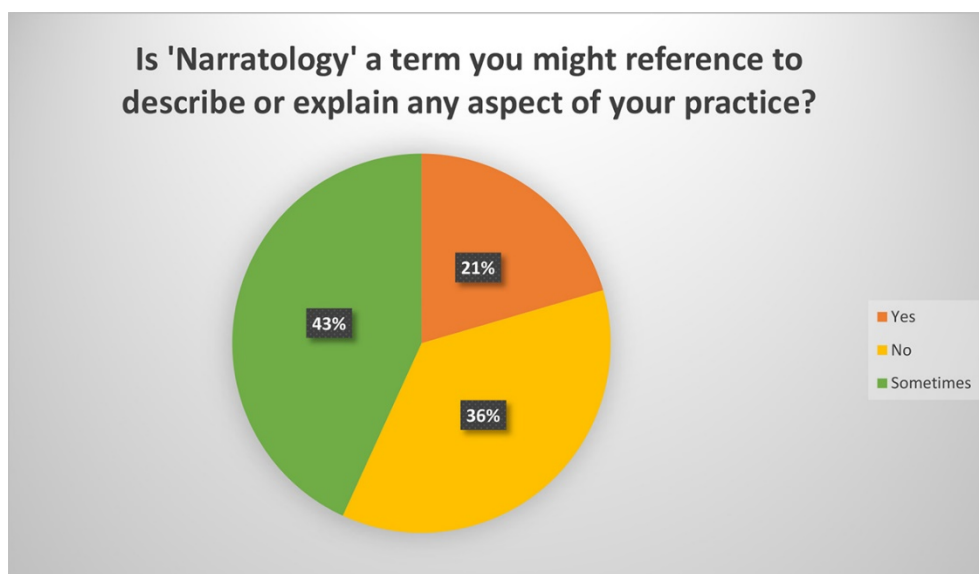


Figure 4.6 Chart representing the responses returned to question 6 from the survey entitled ‘Narrative in Creative Arts Practice’

participants had, there was considerable uncertainty in the responses which related to their understanding of the term. There was limited formal academic knowledge of narrative and a considerable absence of awareness of the term narratology. While the responses to question 6 indicated a substantial portion of participants recognised the term 'narratology' the questions that followed showed that over 72% could not name a practitioner whose work could be described as narrative. Nor would a majority be able to cite a narrative theorist or theory that either influenced, or was relevant to, their own work. One exception was candidate #42 who cited Maurice Blanchot as a narrative theorist and has been an influence on their practice. So, the majority of formally educated candidates, who indicated narrative to be a feature of their work, did not appear to rely on academic references to support their statements. This was concurrent with my own knowledge of narrative prior to beginning the research programme and certainly reflects what Elkins observed when he stated narrative 'just isn't raised in the majority of studio art critiques and exhibition reviews' (Elkins, 2015, p.35).

Questions 10, 11, and 12 sought to gain some access to their concept of narrative without requiring the participants to demonstrate any direct academic knowledge. Apart from classic structural distinctions between 'narrative' and 'story, other options offered were to do with basic constituents of narrative⁸¹ such as causality,

⁸¹ A major aim of classic structuralism was to establish the basic constituents of story to understand how they may surface differently in different media. In the literature review it was mentioned how Seymour Chatman adapted structuralist ideas developed in literature to film. Chatman provides a visualisation of story and discourse on p. 26 of CHATMAN, S. B. 1978. *Story and discourse : narrative structure in fiction and film*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press. Today this continues to be a goal for narratologists who subscribe to transmedial theories of narrative whereby different media can be

or Noël Carroll's 'narrative connection' discussed in the literature review (2001b), as well as other associative functions of narrative including its suitability for supporting engagement and meaning. Figure 4.7 shows some of the response options which were based on properties of narrative, or narrative conditions, that emerged from the early literature review. In Figures 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9 many of the questions, which focused on specific criteria that are often used to separate

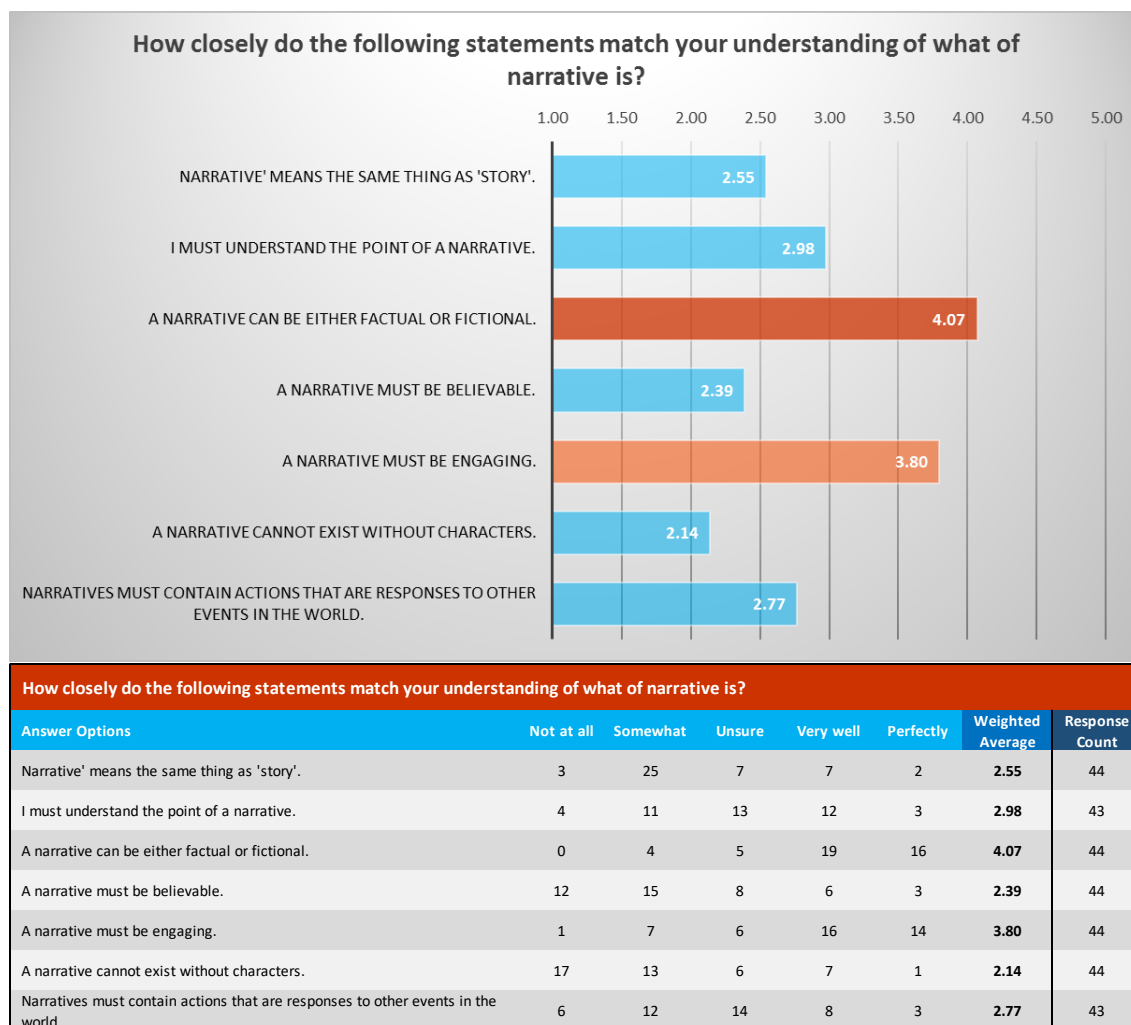


Figure 4.7 Chart and associated data representing the responses returned to question 10 from the survey entitled 'Narrative in Creative Arts Practice'. Each of the statements used a 5-point Likert Scale with values

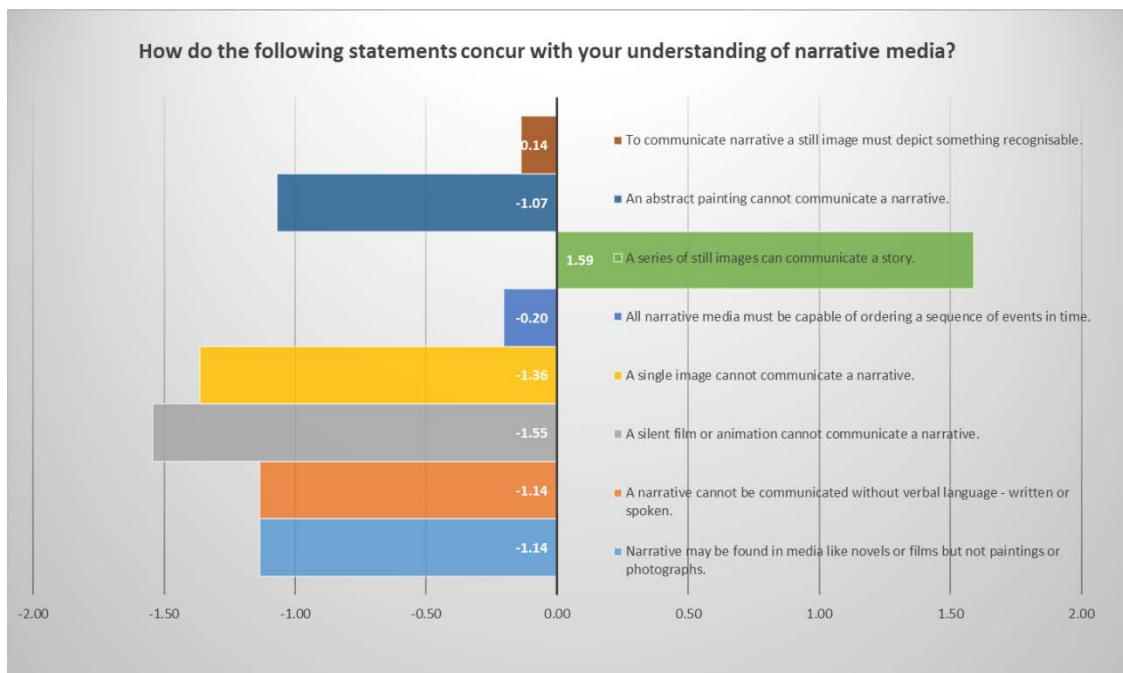
discussed as have a variable level of narrativity. As an example, see Marie-Laure Ryan's proposition for conditions of narrativity which she organises into semantic, formal, and pragmatic dimensions. RYAN, M.-L. 2006a. *Avatars of story*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press. (pp.7-9). See also footnote 43 for an explanation of double -time.

rated from 1 to 5 where strong concurrence (Perfectly) was rated 5 and low concurrence (Not at all) was rated at 1.

narrative content from other types of information, returned responses that were neutral. For instance, the statement 'Narrative means the same thing as story' returned a weighted average of 2.55 from the 44 responses, with a maximum favourable value of 5.0 on the Likert scale (see Figure 4.7). In addition, only two statements offered in Question 10 provided for a strong response when weighted across the 44 participants. It seemed clear to participants that narrative is involved in factual and fictional content (see response 3 in Figure 4.7) and that it is generally regarded as having to be engaging (see response 5 in Figure 4.7). All other statements retrieved a neutral average from the participant group but this may have been due to not having a shared understanding of the nature of the question. For example, the distinction between 'story' and 'discourse' is clear for anyone familiar with narratology, even at an introductory level, and a non-distinct response to this option might indicate a lack of familiarity with narrative theory generally. It can also be considered that in non-academic language, narrative and story are interchangeable, so it may also indicate that the sample of practitioners have no special knowledge of narrative as an academic field and simply apply their general understanding of these terms.

The data gathered from Question 11 (see Figure 4.8) shows that responses to the status of narrative in relation to visual media were quite sharp in response to any suggestion that visual media might not have the capacity to carry narrative on their own or without the support of verbal media. In this case the scale was weighted with positive and negative values. Strongly agree was positively weighted at 2.0

and Strongly disagree was negatively weight at -2.0. Again, in this case, the answer options were derived from arguments found earlier in the literature review which held visual media to poorly support narrative without associated textual content⁸². Selected answer options show a strong pattern in responses that reject the view that visual media cannot communicate narrative, whether it be still images (e.g. abstract paintings), series of images, or audio visual time-based media (e.g. film, video,



How do the following statements concur with your understanding of narrative media?							
Answer Options	Strongly agree	agree	unsure	disagree	Strongly disagree	Weighted Average	Response Count
Narrative may be found in media like novels or films but not paintings or photographs.	2	2	2	20	18	-1.14	44
A narrative cannot be communicated without verbal language - written or spoken.	2	2	4	16	20	-1.14	44
A silent film or animation cannot communicate a narrative.	1	0	1	14	28	-1.55	44
A single image cannot communicate a narrative.	0	0	4	20	20	-1.36	44
All narrative media must be capable of ordering a sequence of events in time.	0	11	19	8	6	-0.20	44
A series of still images can communicate a story.	32	10	0	0	2	1.59	44
An abstract painting cannot communicate a narrative.	0	2	7	21	14	-1.07	44
To communicate narrative a still image must depict something recognisable.	2	10	15	14	3	-0.14	44

⁸² Please refer to Marie-Laure Ryan statement cited from the LHN and quoted in Chapter 2 section 2.3.2 *The importance of disciplinary contexts*.

Figure 4.8 Chart and associated data of response values returned from question 11 from the survey entitled 'Narrative in Creative Arts Practice'. Each of the statements used a 5 point Likert Scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) with values rated from 2.0 to -2.0.

animation). Finally, in the last question of the questionnaire (see Figure 4.9) the question is focussed on how practitioners felt about narrative directly in relation to their own practice. The values in the scale are -2.0 to 2.0 with zero being neutral. While many of the answer options provided for the question have resulted in selections that are close to neutral there are two that which are stronger for the

How do the following statements concur with the place narrative has in your practice?							
Answer Options	Strongly agree	agree	unsure	disagree	Strongly disagree	Weighted Average	Response Count
I sometimes try to present a narrative through my work.	8	31	4	1	0	1.05	44
People will understand the narrative I try to present through my work.	1	17	18	7	1	0.23	44
It doesn't matter if people don't get the narrative I try to present through my work.	4	14	12	11	3	0.11	44
Narrative is part of my creative process, or thinking, but not my final artwork.	3	13	14	13	1	0.09	44
There is no narrative in either my process, thinking or artwork.	1	0	7	24	12	-1.05	44
I do not intend my artwork to carry a narrative but I understand how people might construct one.	2	15	16	8	3	0.11	44
The story I see in my work is not one my audience will necessarily understand.	4	18	15	6	1	0.41	44
People who see my work must also be aware of my process in order to understand the narrative.	2	5	12	21	4	-0.45	44
The narrative in my work is autobiographic.	1	3	19	16	5	-0.48	44
My work provides a narrative which is about how I experience the world.	6	21	10	6	1	0.57	44

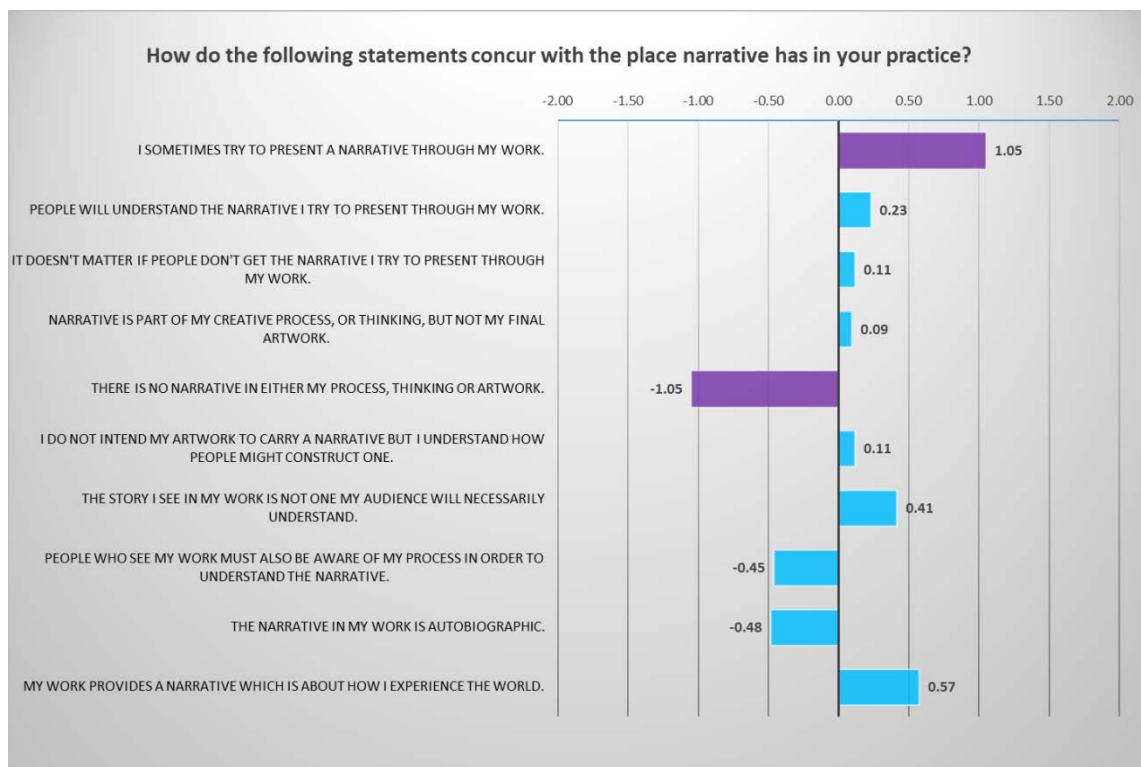


Figure 4.9 Chart and associated data of representing the responses returned to question 12 from the survey entitled 'Narrative in Creative Arts Practice'. Response options could be evaluated positively or negatively with values weighted on the scale from -2.0 to 2.0.

overall participant group. The questions: 'I sometimes try to present a narrative through my work' and 'There is no narrative in either my process, thinking or artwork' scored 1.05 and -1.05 respectively. This is not surprising although it does reinforce a general pattern from the survey which is to do with narrative being included as a feature of practitioners' work. Participants do appear to be of the view that narrative is part of the work but from the overall neutral (weighted average) response to many of the other questions they may not have a clear idea of, or be in agreement as to, how that is the case.

While qualitative questionnaires may be useful in gathering data, they are also limited in what they can achieve in establishing attitudes. It is important therefore to recognise that this survey was conducted to identify patterns which may have been reflected elsewhere. For example, in the wider data set where narrative was used in discussions or reviews of art and design works. This is addressed in detail in the section that follows.

4.3 Characterising the understanding of narrative in creative practice

This section provides a discussion of the creative practice in combination with the findings from the analysis of articles surveyed. In this way, both the creative methods and the qualitative approach are used together to help establish patterns in how narrative is understood from a base within my own work, but which relates to a wider public and academic discourse. In the introduction to the chapter the articles surveyed were listed as academic and non-academic sources gathered

using Google Alerts as well as searches that targeted specific publications such as Artforum, the proceedings of the ISEA symposia, the art and science journal Leonardo, the Narrative & Image online journal, in addition to the handbooks for the Narrative in Practice Symposium in London between 2011 and 2013. The range of publications captured through the Google Alerts included online articles from local and national media covering contemporary exhibitions and art events, as well as statements published on commercial and public gallery and museum websites.

The purpose of the survey of publications was to identify patterns in the way narrative was being used in statements about art and design practice. The method applied in identifying themes and patterns in this data was introduced as Thematic Analysis (TA) in the chapter on methods. The phases of coding first filtered sources deemed irrelevant to the study before generating themes derived from the evidence of how narrative was understood in the various sources. Table 4.1 shows

Phase 3 - Searching for Themes		
ID	Theme Title	References
001	Narrative In The Work	193
002	Narrative Resistance or Rejection	136
003	Extrinsic References or Associations	70
004	Intentionality	80
005	Narrative Techniques	136
006	Character Centred	13
007	Practitioner Centred	140
008	Small Stories and Big Stories	45
009	Curatorial or Institutional	57

010	Interpretation or Reception	99
011	Narrative Function	15
012	Social	9
013	Narratology	123
014	Computationally Tractable	71

Table 4.1 The list of themes that were identified at Phase 3 of the Thematic Analysis

the initial themes derived from the analysis which gives an overall sense of how narrative is used in language around creative practice. These themes were reviewed, merged or reconsidered, and organised into a hierarchy by Phase 5 in accordance with the TA methodology. The top level of the hierarchy is shown in Table 4.2. The categories shown in Table 4.2 summarise a narrative understanding (NU) taken from the way narrative was found to be employed in the articles surveyed. As such, these categories might be regarded as a move towards not so

Phase 5 - Naming Themes	
Theme Title	References
(A) NU-DIRECT (Discourse)	288
(B) NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance)	91
(C) NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical)	94
(D) NU-PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View)	142

Table 4.2 Named categories at Phase 5 derived from the data set.

much a definition of narrative in contemporary art, but an understanding as to how it appears to be characterised, or assumed to be set for the purposes relevant to creative practice. For this reason, each of these categories will be discussed with examples from the survey and examples from my work to show how they correlate with thinking derived from my practice. It is important not to confuse the survey

with any attempt to define narrative in all its uses. Instead the themes operate at a level indicating *patterns* of understanding and provide a structure for discussing narrative in my own work. These categories later lead to establishing, in part, the orientations of the narrative framework.

4.3.1 NU-DIRECT (Discourse)

The category *NU-DIRECT (Discourse)* captures uses of the term narrative where it is understood to be directly available in the work. In the naming of this category the word *discourse* is drawn from its use in classic narratology. As it was interpreted by Seymour Chatman, and derived from classic Francophone structuralism already cited in the literature review, discourse refers to that which is available in the text or artefact – it refers to the means by which a story gets told. This includes, for example, the media used and its affordance to order sequences or promote causal connections between events. The composition, structure, and style of representation may also be important, as are the type of objects represented and how they are configured. The NU-DIRECT category will typically incorporate visual or semantic cues designed by an artist to direct a story which is interpreted by the viewer. In the classic story/discourse pairing, the *story* is a distinct concept to the *discourse* and is defined as a psychological construct derived from an interpretation of the discourse (the artefact) - it is in the mind of the reader or viewer. NU-DIRECT is a category of understanding which identifies narrative as it relates primarily to the properties of the artefact (discourse).

From the data set, commentators on works sometimes refer to techniques or cues that allows a narrative to be suggested by the artwork. For example, a

commentary⁸³ about artist Laurie Hogin's work⁸⁴ in a review of her exhibition at the Little John Contemporary Gallery in New York in October 2014 stated:

The paintings combine visual, conceptual and material strategies from the history of representational painting with tropes of contemporary visual culture including cinema, advertising, fashion, pornography, food photography, retail and museum display and other narrative, representational strategies. These strategies evoke stories, memories and associations in order to convey states of being and behaviors common to humans, and arguably observable in other beings as well. (VisualArtsNewsDesk, 2014)

In this quotation the evidence supporting a narrative reading of the work is understood to be present in the work itself. The work is understood to employ strategies which can be perceived in the material object. The reviewer's awareness of these strategies comes from them being available elsewhere as familiar tropes in contemporary culture but also from the history of representational painting. While there remains disagreement about the extent to which images can facilitate narrative, there has nevertheless been considerable literature addressing narrative in visual narrative art. Important theorists already addressed in the literature review in Chapter 2 have included Roland Barthes, Seymour Chatman, Nelson Goodman, Wendy Steiner, Werner Wolf, Marie-Laure Ryan, H. Porter Abbott, Bence Nanay, James Elkins, and Michael Ranta. Three categories that allow for narratives to be retrieved from images are summarised by Werner Wolf (2003a, p.192) as images

⁸³ See VISUALARTSNEWSDESK. 2014. *New Paintings by Laurie Hogin On View Beginning Today at Littlejohn Contemporary* [Online]. online Broadway World. Available: <https://www.broadwayworld.com/bwwart/article/New-Paintings-by-Laurie-Hogin-On-View-Beginning-109-at-Littlejohn-Contemporary-20141008> [Accessed 12/12/2014].

⁸⁴ <http://littlejohncontemporary.com/laurie-hogin/>

in series, multiphase images, and monophase images⁸⁵. Nelson Goodman's *Twisted Tales* provides good examples of what is meant by DIRECT here, where a road or path through an early or pre-renaissance painting illustrates a life journey travelled⁸⁶. Wendy Steiner has discussed techniques established through traditions in art history to identify paintings using single-point perspective as the prototype example of pictorial narrative - the pregnant moment was one example provided in Chapter 2.

In the data set, of the codes contained in named themes by Phase 5, as described in the methodology, there were 615 references to narrative of which 288 related to this category of NU-DIRECT (Discourse) where narrative understanding was directly attributed to properties of the artefact. In my own work I see these DIRECT strategies most obviously at play in works such as *Tween* (A1.2) and *The Tailor* (A1.4) where the evidence is there to be seen directly in the work. Regarding *Tween* as an example Figure 4.18 and Figure 4.19 are provided as examples of image outputs from the system which produces single still images which are blends of two images automatically selected from a database⁸⁷. These images can be regarded as multiphase in the sense that there are two frames (slices in time) of

⁸⁵ Please refer to footnote 45 in Chapter 2 where these categories are given some explanation.

⁸⁶ See Goodman's treatment of the Hans Memling's *Life of Christ* as an example where he draws out a plotline following the events of Christ's life represented in the painting and which are numbered in the chronological order they occur. See pp.108-109 in GOODMAN, N. [1980] 1981. *Twisted Tales; or, Story, Study, and Symphony*. In: MITCHELL, W. J. T. (ed.) *On narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

⁸⁷ The system was covered in the methodology chapter and is described in detail in Appendix 1, section 1.2

photographic information available in a single frame. While the images are generated by a PHP script which selects and blends images from an online database they are comparable to the double- or multi-exposure



Figure 4.10 Example output from Tween (Green, 2008) which could be interpreted as a frame blend between two scenes in a film or video.



Figure 4.11 Example output from *Tween* (Green, 2008) which appears more symbolic in content.

images traditionally produced by holding the film frame in place in a camera and exposing the film frame more than once. The images are also be reminiscent of what you might see by pausing a video between frames with the effect that two scenes or shots appear in transition. If the image is interpreted as a pause between two video stills there may also be a proclivity to cognitively render the image as a scene from a film narrative. Understood in this way *Tween* encourages the reader of the image to use film as a cultural reference for interpreting the image. The narrative base is one which is inherited from film. In some cases, one could argue a narrative is easily accessible if the output image is ‘pregnant’ with narrative possibilities. In accordance with Marie-Laure Ryan’s conditions of narrativity (2006a, pp. 7-9) the image would be strengthened or weakened in its narrative

force by the amount of conditions it serves⁸⁸. If Figure 4.19 can be imagined as a transition between two frames in a film, then a story set in a major city involving a young woman may be available for recovery.

One of the generally agreed conditions for defining narrative in the literature is 'that a story must be told', 'not found'⁸⁹. In comparison, for a creative practitioner it is possible to stumble upon or discover stories in the process of making work. As previously stated from the discipline of psychology, narrative in thought does not demand language in the same way as it is required in the discipline of literary art. While painters or visual artists typically do not 'tell' stories it would appear from my own experience that they do leave *pointers* there for viewers to be able to narrate the content themselves. I would regard much of my photographic work to date as leaving narrative hints for viewers with the intention they will use cognitive *schema* or *scripts* to arrive at *prototype* explanations about what is going on in the images.

In the case of *manually-composed* works stumbling upon stories as the work is developed through speculation and design is different for works such as *The Tailor* (A1.4) comparative to *Tween* (A1.2). In the latter case, since the image is generated from a collection of pre-programmed functions, the narrative pointers are

⁸⁸ Ryan's conditions of narrative are discussed as features that increase or decrease the narrativity, or 'storiness' of a work. See pp.7-9 of RYAN, M.-L. 2006. *Avatars of story*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press. Ryan lists eight conditions of narrativity which include elements such as a world in which intelligent agents can act in response events. Ryan organized these into four categories which she names Spatial, Temporal, Mental, and Formal and Pragmatic dimensions

⁸⁹ See Lamarque (p.394) in reference to Hayden White: LAMARQUE, P. 2004. On Not Expecting Too Much from Narrative. *Mind & Language*, 19, pp. 393-408.

unavailable until the image is complete. *The Tailor* on the other hand, involved an extended process of building and editing that lasted for weeks before the work was complete. In the course of manually-composing the work different narrative scenarios were considered as new information was introduced and reworked. The process involves finding the right story. So, from a practitioner's perspective narrative guides the process until the correct conditions, and the correct amount of them, are eventually present in the work. The tailor character is one pointer. The dress is another. The sewing machine and the network through which it is connected to the dress is yet another; and then of course there is the environment. These pointers are the discourse elements which serve narrative possibilities to the audience; all of whom will, if suitably motivated, mentally construct a different story.

While auto-composed, data-driven, and responsive works have different affordances for producing narrative possibilities some may be more suitable than others to be understood in this category of NU-DIRECT (Discourse). For example, a narrative understanding of a data driven work such as *Pulse* (A1.3) can be explained in a similar way. The visual channel of the piece represents a space-station which is modelled in 3D software and animated. The video image was then

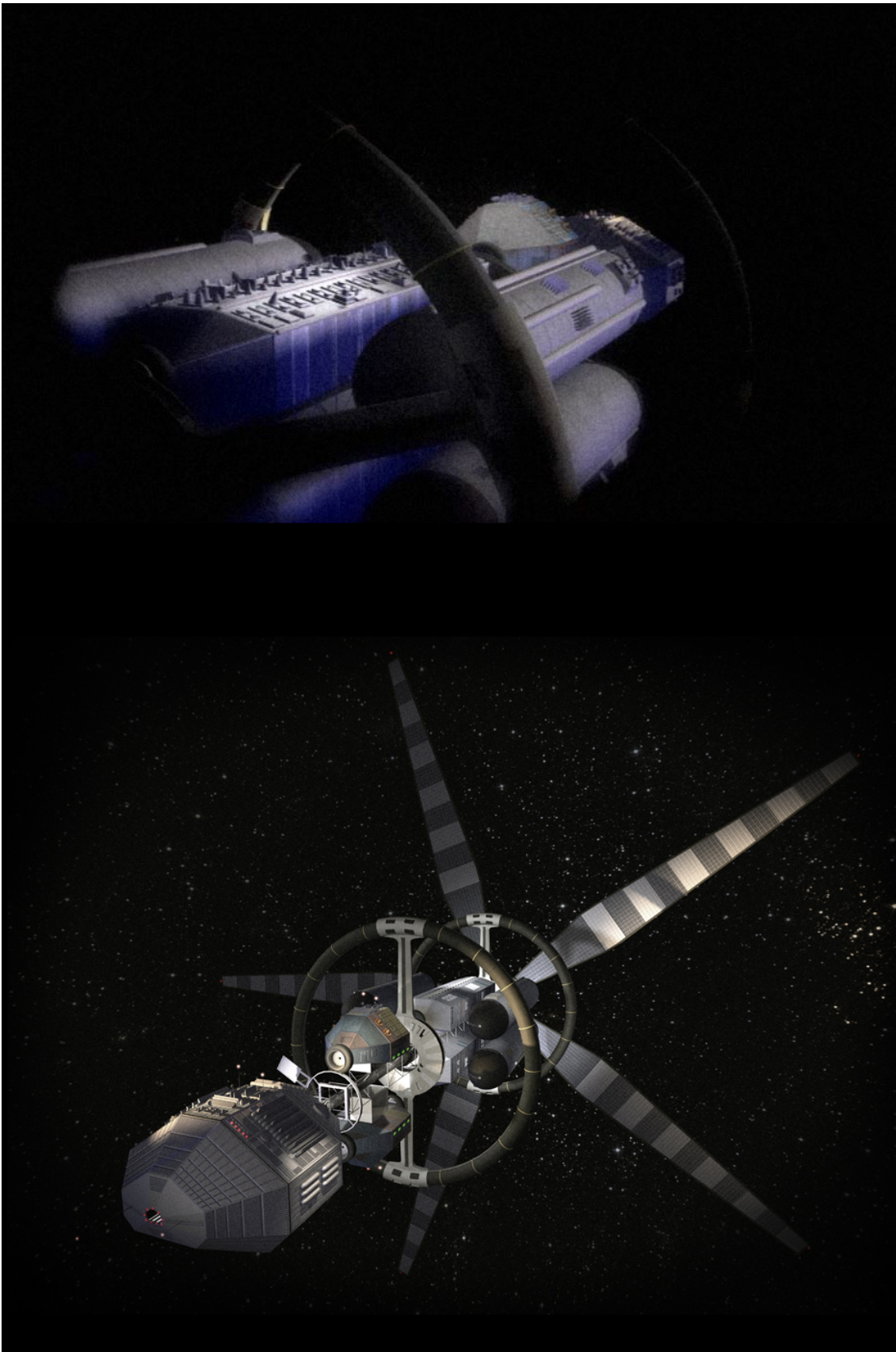


Figure 4.12 Demonstrating the degraded image of *Pulse* designed for the video animation derived from the sharp model of the 3D object below it.

degraded during the rendering process to give the impression that it is shot through a low-resolution camera, the kind one might imagine to be attached to a reconnaissance probe sent out to check its status. The animation is a ten-minute loop which drifts around the station at a slow pace. The pointers in this piece are again the setting (outer-space), the space station, the point-of-view of the camera, and there is also the degraded quality of the video image which is partially blurred with glitches. As explained in the previous chapter the audio channel is controlled by data which I was given access to by the BCO Observatory in Cork. The data is understood by the researchers at BCO as representing pulses of energy emitted from a quasar (black-hole) under their study. This data is captured by a bespoke programme I wrote to grab the appropriate numeric information and convert it to keyframes which control what is output through audio channel. In short, the audio produces a sense of threat from the energy emitted from the black hole, as represented in the data, and sets the atmosphere for the video projected in the exhibition space. In this case then, a narrative understanding can be directly attributed to elements in the discourse. The only difference is that the viewer is made aware that the data driving the audio exists on a server elsewhere, and describes the status of an actual celestial entity obviously not present. Despite the data being elsewhere its effects are present, and so constitutes a pointer in the piece that directs the narrative interpretation of the viewer.

NU-DIRECT (Discourse) as a category for understanding how narrative is present in a work is therefore quite conventional in that it works off traditions in the history of interpreting narrative in pictorial information. A connection should be apparent

with the way historians speak about events in history paintings, for example, Bence Nanay's identification of the act of placing of a crown on Napoleon's head depicted in a Louis David painting as an indication of other actions we should be aware of which happen at coronations.

4.3.2 NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance)

The category NU-INDIRECT (Narrative resistance) holds references to examples where narrative is rejected or negated. This interpretation includes statements using an anti-narrative, counter-narrative, or non-narrative position. This is explained as part of an artistic attitude which refuses easily accessible meanings, or interrupts conventional storylines or causal connections preferred in mainstream cinema or other public media; and typically referenced in definitions of narrative⁹⁰.

This category of understanding can be related to the discussion in the literature review around James Elkins' observations of contemporary studio practitioners whose were characterised as having a marginal interest in narrative at best. It was argued that Elkins' view was correct in the sense that the teaching of art in practice has supported an eschewing of narrative from the concerns of contemporary practitioners. This might be seen as a consequence of how art was influenced by modernist philosophies that underlined pure aesthetics over the semantic or communicative functions of art. A point made in relation to this was that resisting, or countering, narrative is not the same thing as saying that narrative is not there. NU-INDIRECT reflects patterns in the data set where narrative is mentioned but

⁹⁰ The definitions of narrative I am referring to here are those that emerge from literary art and referred to in Chapter 2 section 2.3.2 *The importance of disciplinary contexts*

then discussed from a perspective that interprets the artists attempt to circumvent it. Some examples from the data set are available. Elissa Barnard (2015) reviewing an exhibition entitled *Garbage* by Mathew Reichertz inspired by comic book art states:

The Halifax artist has often used a narrative enigmatically as a back story or an element in his art. This time, he decided to make it more obvious. (Barnard, 2015)

Barnard quotes the artist as saying:

"I thought to myself, I'm dealing with storytelling so why am I hiding the narrative?" [...] "The other thing I realized is there is almost no theorizing of storytelling in contemporary art. Narrative in contemporary art is usually a back story, or truncated narratives are telling half of a story. There isn't a full-fledged narrative in contemporary art." (Barnard, 2015)

Another review is by Lorena Muñoz-Alonso (2015) of Rafaël Rozendaal's public art work projected in Times Square, entitled *Much Better Than This*. Muñoz-Alonso introduces the work by saying 'It's a commercial narrative the artist seems particularly fond of disrupting' (2015). In an article about Ibrahim Mahama's *Fragments* in the Dispatches section of Artforum, Kaelen Wilson-Goldie writes:

Artists may indeed be the best historians in and of Beirut, in no small part because they break all the rules of grand narrative storytelling, and their attention strays away from boldface political headlines to the details and cluttered layers of daily living [...] (Wilson-Goldie, 2015)

It is common for narrative to be characterised this way in relation to art and design works. In these examples Mathew Reichertz is presented as being aware that narrative is there in his practice but usually he holds it back. His decision to make

it more obvious on this occasion appears to be an exception. The review of Rafaël Rozendaal's work interprets it to be creating a disruptive intervention in a context where commercial narratives are normally hosted. There is no explicit narrative detailed in his work *per se*, instead any narrative experience results from how the artwork interrupts public expectations for the kind of commercial content normally shown on the public screen in Times Square. Kaelen Wilson-Goldie's review then specifically credits Ibrahim Mahama's *Fragments* as breaking the rules of grand narrative storytelling. To reiterate a point from earlier, hiding, disrupting, or reinventing the rules of narrative is not the same as saying narrative is not present. In fact, such approaches are consistent with views within contemporary narratology which continues refining its boundaries in response to new conditions or platforms for storytelling. This was indicated in the overview of the literature review at the start of Chapter 2. For example, *The Oulipo* gained credibility when Hypertext was seen to provide new options for storytelling and interactive fiction as were digital games. New options for storytelling have been absorbed into narratology mainly through transmedial theories. David Herman has already been mentioned in this regard stating that narrative is medium independent (Herman, 2004, p.51). Contemporary transmedial theorists have also expanded the boundaries of narrative study to incorporate texts previously not regarded as suitable for narrative analysis. For example, Monika Fludernik's *Natural Narratology* (Fludernik, 1996) made way for the study of Bardic texts and also the work of James Joyce. One influence on Fludernik was Jonathan Culler⁹¹ who

⁹¹ For a concise account of how Culler was used by Fludernik in the development of her concept of natural narratology See section 3, and subsection 3.1.3 in FLUDERNIK, M.

employed the concept of *gapping* to show how straightforward logical events in stories could be avoided, or complicated, to facilitate the participation of the reader. The idea therefore of resisting or subverting commonly used narrative techniques is really a significant part of contemporary narratology. If we remove the requirement for language to be the prototype medium for narrative, then what is recognised by the reviewers of the exhibitions cited above refer to indirect strategies used by artists which are continuous with techniques recognised in contemporary narratology.

In relation to my work the idea of either rejecting or negating narrative makes little sense. In section 3.3 of the methodology I noted that the underpinning philosophical position of the research project is that human beings are *homo narrans*. My practice therefore subscribes to Roland Barthes' original vision for narratology which is that narrative 'is simply there, like life itself' (Barthes, 1977 (1966), p.79) and also Jerome Bruner's view that narrative is one of two mode of human 'cognitive functioning' (1986a, p.11). The idea of counter-narrative or narrative resistance are however integral to my practice. Part of the process of designing works is navigating the gap between that which is obvious and that which is obscure. If the meaning of a work is too clear, then the challenge for an audience to engage is limited. On the other hand, a work that is too esoteric can set a barrier for engagement. Finding the appropriate narrative solution that balances these polarities involves a process of obscuring or resisting narratives that provide

2003. Natural narratology and cognitive parameters. *In*: HERMAN, D. (ed.) *Narrative theory and the cognitive sciences*. Stanford, Calif.: CSLI Publications

clear meanings⁹². This is typically resolved in the *design phase* of the process discussed in the previous chapter under creative methods.

To discuss my work for the perspective of the NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance) category one could make an argument that all works to some degree resist narrative. *The Tailor* (A1.4) is one where this attitude is most apparent and follows exactly the kind of balancing of narrative outlined in the previous paragraph. *The Tailor* is a fine art work designed for exhibition, so no client was involved. I did collaborate with Dr. Paul Walsh, who produced the background landscape using an algorithm based on genetic mutation which was designed with an aesthetic goal however as far as the composition and crafting of the work I had full ownership. The visual elements were developed, composited, evaluated, and changed throughout the process until the final narrative was settled to my satisfaction. The title of the work provided some clue to the profession of the main character who also carries a tape measure around his neck. The posture of the character, the dress, the location all provide clues to the meaning of the work but the overall situation presented is unusual. It is not the everyday work place of a tailor. Any story that can be interpreted will have to be derived from what I judged to be sufficient information provided in the image. This is a judgment I arrive at knowing the work will be installed as part of an art festival or exhibition. I know

⁹² An author attempting to design suitable gaps in a work of literary fiction might be directed to a technique Victor Shklovsky called 'roughening the surface' SHKLOVSKY, V. 1926. Art as technique. In: LEMON, L. T. & REIS, M. J. (eds.) *Russian formalist criticism : four essays*. Second edition. ed.: which introduced the idea of poetic ambiguity to the novel. Shklovsky used the Laurence Sterne's famous work *Tristram Shandy* to illustrate various techniques such as elaborate flashbacks and flashforwards to complicate the more straightforward techniques of narration typical to the 18th century novel.

the audience will be trained in art and therefore have a sophisticated knowledge of such strategies. It is logical therefore to resist any straightforward meaning that will not offer the viewer a scenario to solve for themselves. If an image were designed for educational purposes, or as part of a graphic campaign to punch home some message to the public then the strategy would aim for less ambiguity.

A similar argument could be made for *Pulse* (A1.3) which is designed for an art audience and aims to be ambiguous. There is no clear indication about what is going on, just pieces of audio-visual information and data with some additional explanation on wall plate in the exhibition. This is deliberate, again based on a judgement about those who will see it; people with an interest in art and therefore some willingness



Figure 4.13 A data-driven video installation entitled *Pulse* installed at the Wandesford Quay Gallery in Cork in 2010.



Figure 4.14 *Family Portrait* 2010-2011 (auto-composed and live portraits)

to do work figuring it out. *Family Portrait* (A1.5) does not quite resist narrative as the portraits do not serve many of the conditions that would be required to generate a narrative experience of the work. However, the composite images are drawn by a software program written to combine the pixels from individual portraits taken of related family members, the resulting effect is a stillness that is reminiscent of pre-twentieth-century period paintings. If it is possible for the viewer to pick up such associations from the stylistic pointers in the images, then narrative may be triggered in a similar way to how period paintings invoke it. For the gallery visitor with an awareness of realism in art approaching the end of the nineteenth century a narrative connection might be possible. In this way there are pointers in the images but they are minimised to such a degree that other readings are may also be available. For instance, having some background understanding of how the

images are generated may also inspire considerations about genetic associations or the psychology of the characters who inherit the personalities or moods from their kin. Whatever the interpretation I am conscious of these potential narrative readings which I elect to leave understated. It is not that narrative is resisted *per se* but the pointers are so minimal in these images it is questionable whether it is likely a viewer would be provoked to construct a narrative from them.

4.3.3 NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical)

The use of intentional in the category NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical) is loosely aligned with the philosophical concept of intentionality. It is meant to indicate that the understanding of narrative is one where a story is *about* something. It refers therefore to the content of a narrative rather than being concerned, as were the previous categories, with features of a work or the technique or strategy its uses (resistance to narrative). In this category the work is understood to be about something. It has a narrative. This could be could be an artist's life story (biography), or wider socio-political or cultural stories that are associated with the nationality of the artist that are somehow interpreted through the work. For example, there may be a tendency to interpret the work of a Cuban artist against a background narrative of life under communist dictatorship, or a Northern Irish artist in the context of sectarian tensions, whether or not there are explicit cues in the work itself. The work itself sometimes requires contextualisation or support from other media such as exhibition literature, artist statements, public talks, or reviews to communicate the *aboutness* of the work.

To elucidate this, following are three quotations from three sources, of different academic standing, coded under the NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical) theme. The first is from a review of an exhibition in Tucson, Arizona in a daily online news source; the second is from a Leonardo Journal article in 2012; and the third is a review of the Tenth Shanghai Biennale in Artforum International from 2015.

Moen said. " BACKTRACK was an opportunity to have that conversation in a neutral environment. We specifically told each and every artist that whether we agreed with their position on race or not, we would post their unedited narrative." (Molloy, 2015)

Wolkenkuckucksheim uses components of the spatial, temporal and hypothetical environment of the Cognitive Systems Group in the Cartesium building at the University of Bremen to stage a narrative. This narrative is fitted within the familiar narratives of the resident scientists' everyday lives. (Weissensteiner and Freksa, 2012, p. 422)

In "Social Factory," the main exhibition of the Tenth Shanghai Biennale, chief curator Anselm Franke, along with Cosmin Costinas, Liu Xiao, Freya Chou, Hila Peleg, and Nicholas Bussmann, focuses on the political reality of modern China's own social engineering through works by local and international artists, extending Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's narrative of the "factory" from their 2000 book Empire, in which labor is no longer confined inside workshop walls but "dispersed across the unbounded social terrain."(Lau, 2015)

The understanding of narrative as it is used in these three contexts is common in the sense that the interpretation of artwork is set against stories in the wider world. This application of narrative is one which operates to simplify the meaning of the work and tie it in to wider socio-political, economic, or cultural issues which are both meaningful and accessible to a general audience. The significance of the work

is spelled out in terms of human experience and interest which are shared values both within and outside the artworld. In Molloy's account she quotes the curator's democratic policy to include all views on race unedited. Whether or not you would refer to the artists' pieces in this exhibition as narrative works is not, is outside the focus of the NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical) category; the fact is their work is about a wider narrative of the racial tensions demonstrated in race riots such as those in Ferguson and Baltimore in 2014.

The 'narrative of the "factory" (Lau, 2015) in the review of the Shanghai Biennale could be compared to way in which Jens Haaning's work was discussed Chapter 2, section 2.53. The significance in this case is one that is set against a wider story of labour conditions in the twenty-first century. In the same way as Haaning's work is not promoted as narrative art, Lau's use of the term narrative points to nothing specific in artworks just that they can be interpreted within a context of a backstory involving something called the 'social factory'.

In exactly the same way, Weissensteiner and Freksa's account in the Leonardo Journal about their interactive installation project in University of Bremen refers to staging a narrative. On this occasion the narrative is a 'familiar' one 'of the resident scientists' everyday lives' (Weissensteiner and Freksa, 2012, p. 422). These are the *small stories* discussed in Chapter 2 which were shown as devices that help us navigate unusual everyday situations. Goffman provided us with strategies for understanding the situations and conditions under which the content of these stories is produced, while Bruner emphasised the cognitive functioning that allows us to make sense of those situations. While Weissensteiner and Freksa

do in fact discuss their installation with references to narratological sources⁹³ on this occasion their use of narrative is one that is *about* the everyday.

As an example of the NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical) category applied to my own work, *Myths* (A1.1) is a good example. In the previous chapter because of the diverse methods used in process of creating the individual works which are encompassed within *Myths* it was necessary also to describe the overall significance of the work. There I explained how I started initially with the intent of capturing the aesthetic beauty of the Irish landscape as an environment which could be interpreted as a set for ancient mythologies. Since the Irish landscape is bound up with mythology in a way which is distinct within international Celtic mythological tradition. The landscape in Ireland is extremely important as cultural heritage. This is in part explained by how archaeological projects in the late nineteenth century revealed ancient dwellings within the landscape understood through folklore to accommodate powerful beings who inhabited both the underworld and the living world above ground. There are many accounts of this in Celtic literature but Natalie Barber puts it succinctly when she states:

'In the case of Ireland, the atmosphere of the island's natural landscape and its effect on both the ancient and modern culture should not be underestimated. The landscape in which mythic beings lived, fought, and died is both visible and accessible in Ireland's mountains, lakes, mounds, seashores, ruins, and forts.' (Barber, 2014, p.31)

⁹³ I discuss these sources further on in the chapter in **section** dealing with the formality in the language about narrative.

Since remote landscapes in Ireland have recently been targeted for the siting industrial wind farms the work demonstrates a concern for how narrative rhetoric is used by state authorities and corporations to control attitudes to the environment which serve political and commercial interests in addition to well-intentioned strategies for mitigating climate change. The work is concerned about the loss of access to this cultural heritage as a result of such a dramatic technological intervention in the landscape. The work is about a conflict of political and commercial narratives and those which are traditionally promoted through the landscape as heritage. To look at the examples in Figure 4.33 one would be forgiven for associating them



Figure 4.15 (L) Myth #8 Eachros and (R) Myth #9 Maoileann

with a traditional approach to landscape photography in Ireland. A kind seen in the narratives promoted by the Tourist Board in marketing literature designed to sell the mythical qualities with which the land has been long associated.

While it is possible to read these images within the context of traditional pictorial narratives the images do not contain many of the pointers that would send a viewer in that direction. However even if they did, the point here is that the use of narrative in the language from the articles retrieved and coded as NU-INTENTIONAL

(Topical) emphasises an aboutness of the works. It is important to note also that who it is that speaks about the work controls how the narrative is significant or meaningful. This is the addressed in the following and final theme which is to do with point-of-view.

4.3.4 NU-PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View)

The last category, NU-PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View), captures a theme that is to do with who it is that narrates. The interpretation, or indeed the construction, of the narrative may be attributed to the practitioner, an institution, or a third-party critic or agency. The practitioner may narrate their own work from a personal or professional perspective. But there is also the curator, critic or reviewer there to cast works with wider significance which interprets their value to the art world, or demonstrates the social, cultural, or political significance of art in general.

In article entitled *Tate Modern opens doors to African visionaries Salahi and Gaba* has an accompanying tagline which states 'Exhibitions of works by artists from Sudan and Benin reflects a step change towards Tate's more globalised view of modern art'. Within the body of the article the curator, Salah M Hassan, is quoted as saying 'African artists had for too long been excluded from the narrative of art history' (Ibid). Later in the article the significance of the Salahi and Gaba exhibitions is put into historical context through the voice of the curator:

El-Salahi, widely regarded as the father of African modernism, had a landmark show at the ICA in 1963 and then "suddenly in the 70s and 80s there was a decline in interest in African artists. The importance of this show is to fill gaps in the narrative and globalise the narrative." (Brown, 2013)

Within this one article it is possible to see three levels of narration. On the one hand there is Mark Brown, the author of the article writing for the Guardian newspaper, secondly there is the curator of the exhibition, Salah M Hassan, and then there are the artists whose work is represented in the exhibitions, Ibrahim El Salahi and Meschac Gaba. The perspectives from these sources will provide different views about the work. The use of narrative specifically in the quotation above reflects the curators vision which incorporates the artists' individual works but also targets the institution of western art as it is represented by the Tate Modern. The curator's perspective is the story of West African art and its absence with international art history, while Mark Brown sees the exhibitions as a sign of the Tate Modern's adopting a wider international scope by extending its interests in art beyond Europe.

While curatorial perspectives were prominent in the NU-PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View) category the vision of practitioners was also present. In the previous section the account of Weissensteiner and Freksa is one example. There is also Mathew Reichertz's awareness demonstrated in quotations in the section above on NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance). In addition to these, there is an article about an American artist, Nathan Spoor. Spoor presents a concept called *Suggestivism* which he explains he had developed since graduate school. He explores this through his own artwork and a book entitled *Masterworks* associated with his curatorial practice and collaboration with other like-minded artists. Spoor's practitioner-centred perspective on narrative demonstrates his view as one that is consistent with traditions in art history where paintings are cast as narrative

objects. At the same time Spoor also shows the attitude witnessed by James Elkins in his involvement with studio art critiques; that is, a contemporary resistance to, or subversion of, narrative. In an article written by Sander Roscoe Wolff on the hosting of *Masterworks* at the Long Beach Museum of Art in 2015 quotes Spoor as follows:

This comes from working with artists that are committed to the new contemporary artistic vein of narrative or storytelling visuals [...] While offering a selection of artists creating work that is deep in inspiration, we see a range of contemporary artists who deliberately invoke the narrative tradition - works drawn from life, history, mythology - while undermining it at the same time. (Wolff, 2015)

With regard to my own practice, from the outset of the programme of study there was an awareness of the practitioner as a special kind of viewer; one who has access to the processes used to generate, develop, and deploy a piece of work. The scope of information an artist has about their work is obviously quite different to that of any third-party viewer. As such the process of making work for me was to understand narrative as a guiding logic. In reflecting on the work now the moments of discovery and surprise, are moments laden with narrative which influence greatly the creative design decisions that follow. None of this however is amply explained by calling on theories or approaches to narrative typically addressed by art historians. Since narrative is embedded in the interactive exchanges people have on a day-to-day basis the idea of narrative being ubiquitous rather than special to great art seemed more appealing. Therefore, the concept of the small story was important before I had the knowledge to name it.

Similarly, the idea of interaction being based on everyday human-to-human exchanges led to desk research which related to narrative in face-to-face situations and subsequently to some of the sociological and anthropological influences outlined in the literature review. Bruner, Ochs and Capps, and Goffman being key to establishing a frame for how I as a practitioner could understand narrative to be at play in my work. In this way designing programs to auto-compose works such as *Tween* (A1.2) or *Family Portrait* (A1.5) was conceptualised by me as a process akin to conversational interaction. It was possible to imagine the interaction with *Tween* as a form of turn-taking. The interaction with the system produces images which are indiscernible or little interest. These images are ephemeral and are not stored on the user's computer. This can continue for a short time while you repeatedly poke the system with a mouse-click and rewrite the image on the screen. Quick turns continue until an image with enough significance presents itself. This pattern of interaction is similar to how narrative surfaces in everyday talk, in that turns are taken in quick succession until something interesting is told and when this content becomes narratively loaded then typically one party to the conversation is given the floor to complete their story. The structure of small stories is therefore not considered in the same way as structures in 'great' stories since they do not have the same disciplinary roots. While my attitude to narrative with respect to manually-composed works was sufficiently covered by the literature in art history and semiotics (structural and post structural theories), aspects of the auto-composed, data-driven and responsive works were ill supported by the existing narratological scholarship. From the perspective of responsive works by other artists which interested me there was often a dramaturgical or

micro-social dimension to them. For example electronic artworks such as *Boundary Functions* by Scott Snibbe (1998) ⁹⁴ or *Hand From Above* by Chris O'Shea (2009) contain the possibility of being discussed in narrative terms when small stories, based on socially significant events, were the prototype.

Such orientations towards narrative in everyday life became more important as electronic works such as *Probe* (A1.6) and *Trails* (A1.7) were developed. The *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* (A1.8) which also incorporated responsive electronic components, was well served by extending the academic basis for narrative to include appreciations of everyday interactions as dramatic events. The academic basis for this was introduced in section 2.5 in the literature review with the emphasis on the work of Jerome Bruner, Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps and Erving Goffman. This extended an appreciation for the aesthetic value of small stories and helped me design for situations where the works were intended to intrigue people caught unawares. Regarding *Trails* I had explicit ideas about how narrative would play a role, whereas *Probe* developed in collaboration with Mark Cullen and took its own path through a process that was negotiated between us. However, I will close this section with a short discussion of *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* which provides a good example of the category NU-PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View) where the specific perspective on narrative is understood by the practitioner while being invisible to the museum visitor.

⁹⁴ See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Ax4pgtHQDg for Scott Snibbe's explanation of *Boundary Functions* as it was first exhibited in 1998.

The premise of the *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* (A1.8) was to use narrative as a way of investigating a museum space. A detailed description of the work is available in the previous chapter in section 3.2.4. and in Appendix 1, section 1.8. To quickly refresh, the study of the museum was conducted on the premise that people navigated around the space with the support of printed material and an audio tour. The audio tour gave instructional and descriptive information about where to go or stand in order to follow narrative content about convicts, prison guards and other staff who worked in the gaol. The audio tour was provided on Sony Walkman tape players (which have subsequently been replaced with MP3 players). As a consequence of the outdated audio technology visitors who used the audio tour followed a relatively predictable path around the museum as they were introduced to different stories in each of the cells. By being familiar with the audio content, and by conducting observations in the space, it was possible to identify when these visitors were receiving instructions from the player and when they were engaged in a story. In between stories they were open to distraction and in general many began to lose interest half-way through the tour. As such we could identify specific locations in the gaol where visitors removed headphones and began to wander and explore the building more openly. In one of these locations a video of an upset young convict was fitted behind a spyhole in a cell door as illustrated in Figure 4.36. If a visitor opened the spyhole an electronic sensor programmed in Pure Data (PD) would activate an audio recording in an attempt to capture what people would say on discovering the video. Further observations were then conducted which showed that the discovery of the video immediately promoted investigation of all spyholes on that wing of the gaol. Up to that point those

observed they did not interact with the building at all. The locations where people began to lose interest and wander were referred to as *narrative holes* in the space which could be exploited with designed interventions.

It is possible to argue that an image of an upset child behind a prison cell door is a narrative in its own right, in a similar way to how the Thomas Faed's homeless boy on the cover of the *Artist as Narrator* is a narrative image. One is a proxy child from Irish history, the latter a prototype Dickensian character. As mentioned

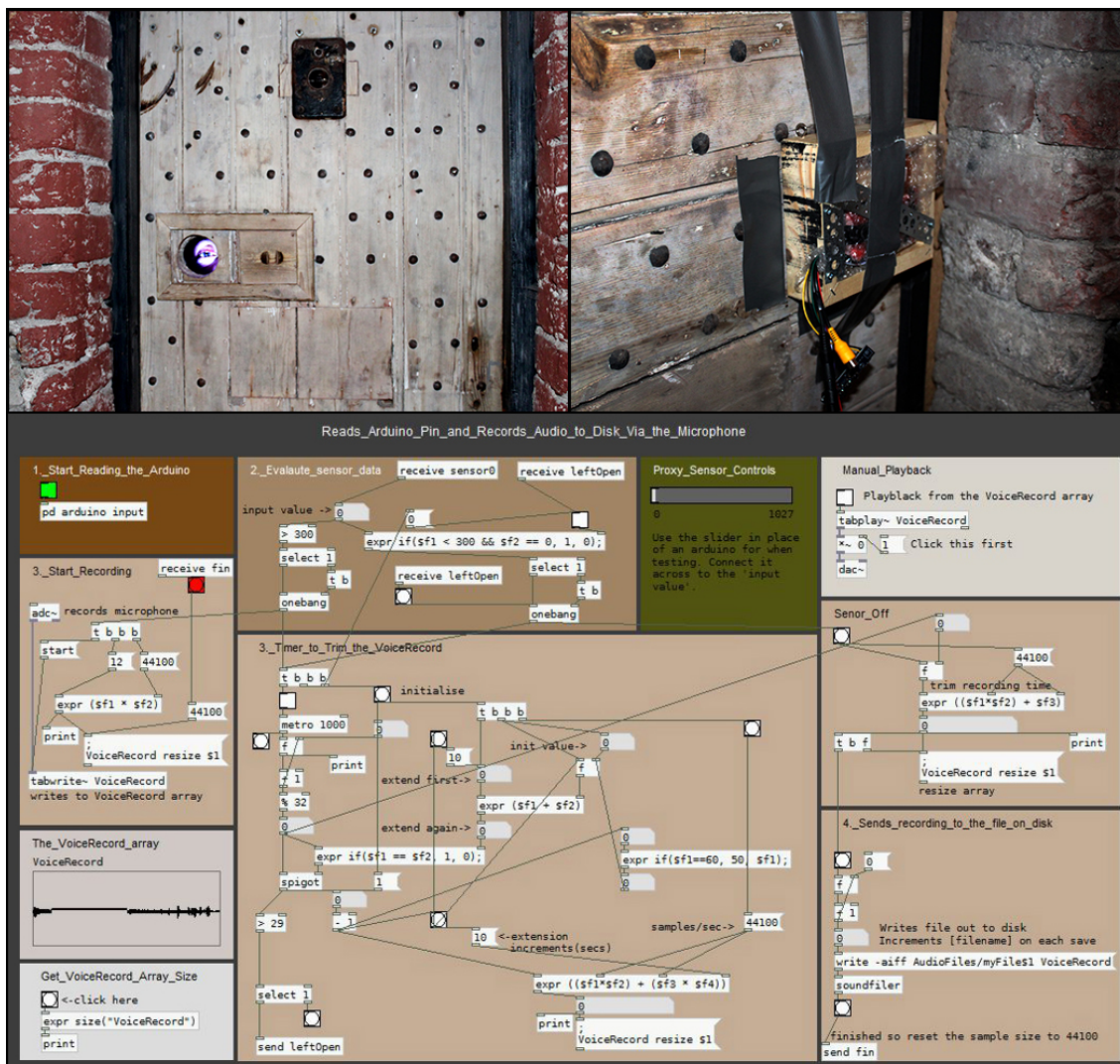


Figure 4.16 A video of a young child convict shown behind one of the cell door spyholes. The lower part of the image shows the PD script designed to auto-record talk in front of the spyhole.

already this work is explained fully in Appendix 1. Here it is presented as an example of how narrative can be used as a method by a practitioner to explore visitor experience in a museum. The narrative understanding, categorised as NU-PERSPECTIVAL (point-of-view), is exclusive to the practitioner. Narrative here serves a design goal and is unavailable in this case to the audience who are confronted by the video.

Therefore, the creation of these works and the creative thinking, and collaborations, involved in their design, promoted an alternative search in the fields of social inquiry which would later help with the construction of the framework where interaction and participation were an essential part of how narrative could be understood. These concepts of sociality and responsiveness are important orientations in the narrative framework and the practical work developed was critical in how those orientations could be imagined.

4.4 Levels of formality of the language about narrative in art

4.4.1 Survey of articles from Google Alerts

In the initial research questions, it was raised that even if there was evidence of narrative being prominent in the discourse of contemporary art, how could it be described? Would narrative in the language about art be influenced by an existing formal lexicon drawn from narratology? The articles sourced through the Google Alerts search were pulled largely from mainstream or local media publications which have an online presence. These publications range from *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* to regional journalistic media such as the *Nelson Times* and *Kent Online*, to museum websites and magazine publications on creative arts, such

as, *Its Nice That!* and *MutualArt.com*. From this part of the data set one could assume there may be more evidence of language one could describe as informal. In these publications it would be unsurprising to find, for example, 'narrative' and 'story' being discussed without distinction.

In a review of Amy Casey's work in *Its Nice That!*, Justin Cartwright, one of the editors of the online art and design magazine, sees a definite narrative in Casey's work:

There's a narrative running through all of Amy Casey's work that you'd almost definitely miss if you we're only giving it a passing glance. The Cleveland-based artist creates huge, sprawling canvasses full of impossible, gravity-defying structures, bound together with ropes and propped up on stilts. Each one references a building that exists in the real world, and Amy compulsively collects photographs of American structures to incorporate into her paintings. As a result she likes to think that there are people living within her pieces, and the narrative of each series is dependent upon their needs.
(Cartwright, 2013)

While Casey's work shows what appear to be fascinating imagined urban landscapes they do not represent any characters or depict any action. So, while there may be reasons to refer to them as narrative works it is completely unclear from the article how the images might be different from images of landscapes that are non-narrative. A statement by the artist on her website about the work provides no additional clues:

My cities are shaped by: everyday observations; cause and effect; a non-linear narrative; composition, movement and color; sleep deprivation; and at times,

a desire to see large groups work together towards a common goal- making something bigger than themselves individually. (Casey, 2014)

However in an short video produced by Ted Sikora for the Cleveland Arts Prize in 2009 it is possible to see that narrative is working for the artist in her thinking, and appears to operate as a structuring support for her decisions as an artist in the making of the work (Sikora, 2009, 0:54-2:20)⁹⁵. Unless we have access to this practitioner-cantered account by Casey it very difficult to guess at how Cartwright could have described these works as narratives.

There are other accounts where artist practitioners do not assume their use of narrative to be automatically understood. For instance, Nathan Spoor, mentioned in the previous section, co-curated an exhibition with Jeff McMillan entitled *Masterworks* hosted by Long Beach Museum of Art from 23rd October 2014 to 1st February 2015. The exhibition was accompanied by a book entitled *Masterworks: Defining a New Narrative* (Spoor, 2014). In this Spoor promotes a concept he calls Suggestivism to help explain the nature of the exhibited works and the way in which narrative is understood to be at work. Suggestivism is described in an earlier catalogue by Spoor (2011a) which accompanied an exhibition at Cal State University's Grand Central Art Center. An extract from the catalogue is quoted on the publisher's website:

⁹⁵See SIKORA, T. 2009. Amy Casey Cleveland Art Prize. Cleveland Arts Prize. Vimeo. <https://vimeo.com/25658840>

“Suggestivism” is the embodiment of each artist’s individual intent in his or her own art pieces, created with a unique sense of purpose, amplified understanding, and sensitivity to outside visual stimuli.

Drawing from interior and exterior influences, the artists featured work in a variety of different mediums to present vivid scenes that leave narrative to the imagination and meaning open to interpretation. (Spoor, 2011b)

While again the use of narrative by Spoor is vague, it does intimate a model which is dependent on being constructed at the point of reception of the work. The concept of Suggestivism also gives some further clue to what Spoor may have in mind about how concepts can be suggested by a work with the possibility of being woven into some kind of story by the viewer. While Spoor draws on Suggestivism to help articulate this creative thinking, there are concepts in narratology that appear analogous to what he intends. For instance, the work by Eleanor Rosch (Rosch et al., 1978) or Georg Lakoff (1987, 1999) in the development of prototype theory which inspired other work in psychology (e.g. cognitive blending (Turner, 1996), potentially offer a better way of considering how the mind imagines and constructs associative connections between objects presented in visual form. Bruner’s work on narrative thinking (1986a, 1990, 2004) is an obvious example if one were to consider the artists’ constructivist processes in the making of the work. Equally Herman’s extensive scholarship in narrative and cognition (1999, 2002, 2003, 2010, 2011) would hold considerable value when trying to articulate the kind of alternative schema that may be at work for the artist or designer assembling works that call on particular story references. Even Monika Fludernik’s ‘Natural Narratology’ may be sympathetic to the kind of gap filling cognitive activities at

play in the reading of visual works. While this wealth of resources are already available from the formal study of narrative, they are not employed in the discourse on visual art mentioned here. This might be explained by saying that traditionally these resources, from the literary, sociological and psychological fields, are simply not part of the customary points of reference used by arts practitioners to present what it is they say is going on with their work.

The resources returned from the Google Alerts are rich with examples of artists, curators, or critics making statements about narrative in art and utilising it in a quotidian term with little explanation or qualification. The Storylines exhibition at the Solomon Guggenheim is a good recent example of a collection of work gathered together explicitly under a narrative frame. Some selected quotations by a reviewer, the curator, and a critic of the exhibition are as follows:

For these artists, the telling of a story does not necessarily involve a plot, characters, or setting. The potential narrative resides rather in the everyday objects and materials used as well as the cultural associations that they create. (Gaidot, 2013)

These artists are embracing storytelling, mythology, narrative devices within their art, and often to address themes that are very political or social, quite critical, and some really just dealing with fantasy. The exhibition will open with a selection of works by artists we consider, to some extent, pioneers or an earlier generation who have been working with narrative material. They also happen to be artists with whom we've worked before and have done one-person exhibitions and have their work in-depth in the collection. So that is Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Matthew Barney, and Cathy Opie.

Some of our thinking really revolved around the gold curtain ["Untitled" (Golden)] by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, which dates to the early '90s. And Felix was an artist who was keenly aware of the power of abstract form to convey actual content about homoerotic love, about the body, about health, about

politics. And that gold curtain for me became very paradigmatic of this, what I call a narrative turn. (Spector, 2015, 00:25-01:36)

There is no overt narrative in the film but it suggests some possibilities as to what might be going on. Are the men doing some sort of spiritual exercise? Is it athletics? Is it almost something military? Its ambiguous. (Brinson, 2015, 01:37-01:51)

The first quotation is from a statement on the Storylines exhibition in the Art Media Agency (AMA) Professional Newsletter, which is edited by Aline Gaidot. The two statements that follow, from Nancy Spector (Chief Curator at the Guggenheim) and Katherine Brinson (Curator, Contemporary Art at the Guggenheim), are extracted from videos on the Guggenheim's website publicising the exhibition. While the presence of narrative is acknowledged by people here, who clearly have an intimate knowledge of contemporary art, they do not cite existing narrative concepts which qualify what it is they mean by the term. This is the case even when it is central to the theme of individual works and the exhibition as a whole. Spector's use of 'narrative turn' is without reference to any wider academic or cultural context, and the ambiguity in Brinson's statement about Rashid Johnson's work is one that is common in statements drawn from the data set. It is not to say there is not sufficient knowledge to stand over such statements, just that there is evidence of an attitude that suggests the term narrative requires no explanation in the context of art practice.

4.4.2 Survey of academic resources

In academic journals one might anticipate a more precise use of language. With respect to Image [&] Narrative, which describes itself as 'a peer-reviewed e-journal

on visual narratology', this is certainly true of the publication in general. However when one examines articles collected under a double issue of the journal in 2011 (Carson and Miller, 2011a, 2011b), entitled 'The Story of Things: reading narrative in the visual', there is a distinct difference in the manner in which narrative is treated by those from different disciplinary backgrounds. Papers in the issues (Vol 3 & Vol4), such as those by Prof. Karen Bassi (2011) and Dr. Gyöngyvér Horváth (2011) are formal in their approach to narrative with a respect shown for the treatment of narrative in their own fields. Prof. Bassi's question which is 'how objects within narrative prefigure "the potential for narrative within the artefact."' (p.29) is addressed through reference to existing academic historical scholarship and allows her to locate her ideas relevant to others such as W.V. Quine and Paul Ricœur. Bassi's background is in Literature and Classics so one would expect this formality. Equally Horváth, with a background in Art History uses the conventions of that discipline to support her discussion of temporal and visual anachronism in relation to Carlo Crivelli's painting, *Ascoli Annunciation* (1486, National Gallery of London) (p. 8).

Other articles, in these same issues of Narrative & Image, which are written by arts practitioners are however variable in the formality they use to support their employment of narrative. For instance, while the art object is cast as a conduit for stories in the paper by Dr. Mary O'Neill (2011) there is nothing to state what mechanics might be involved in enabling the art objects she writes about to communicate stories. One could imagine scholarship from the field of narrative therapy, or cognitive narratology, being a useful line of reference. Parry and Butler

(2011) on the other hand deal with visual narrative from the perspective of a book of photographs edited by them which also included their own photographic work. In their case, the questions asked were also of concern in my study.

Where is the sense to be made and where can the narrative be found? Is it in the photographs, the moment of time depicted? Or in the object, the subject of the photograph? In the process and materials evident in the making? Is it in the gaps between the images, or in the relationship between them? Is it hidden within the text or in the design and layout? (Parry and Butler, 2011, p.63)

There is clearly a recognition that any experience of narrative from their work is not necessarily gained from an existing 'conventional or recognisable narrative framework' (p.63). However, in explaining the presence of narrative as it emanates from their work, the narrative resources called on are exactly those conventional ones: Roland Barthes and John Berger. How narrative might be at work in the 'process and materials evident in the making' of the photographs is not a topic that is particularly well addressed by Barthes or Berger. This is not to demean these practitioners' who clearly seek formal academic resources in attempting to get closer to how narrative is important to their work. Instead, it is evidence of a poor academic support made available to practitioners despite narratology's expansive resources.

A closer study was conducted on the proceedings of the International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA) where there was both a high instance of references to

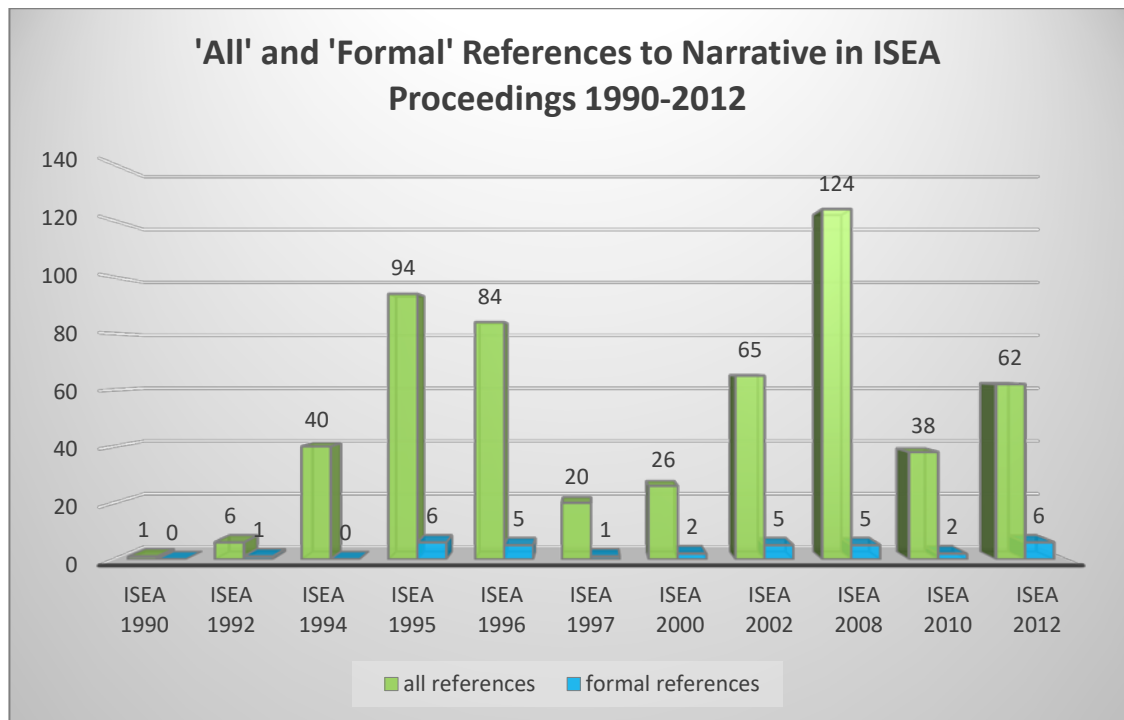


Figure 4.17 Number of discreet articles referencing narrative generally compared to formal uses of narrative in ISEA Proceedings sampled from 1990 - 2012

narrative and within those there was a considerable number of articles that could be linked to recognisable academic discourse from narratology. Articles in ISEA demonstrated a mix of what might be regarded as informal and formal uses of narrative in its articles published in the past. These articles are charted in Figure 4.10. The chart shows a comparison of everyday informal uses of the term employed by authors and artists in comparison to articles that demonstrate a more considered use of the term. Two important observations can be made on the use of narrative as it appears in the ISEA proceedings. The first is that only a relatively small proportion of references to narrative available in the proceedings address narrative in any significant way. These are summarised in Table 4.1, and we can say that narrative is articulated to be an important factor in the work of the practitioners referenced as much with regard to the making of work as to its

Formal References by Year	Authors / Practitioners and Titles
ISEA 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rhythm and Structure of Multicultural Communication by Patricia Search
ISEA 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial Changelings A Work Of A Responsive Cinema In Progress by Toni Dove Interaction Arising from Installations by Teresa Elliott Literary Hypertext from A Writer's Point of View by Judith B. Kerman Interface Metaphors & New Narratives Media in Interactive by George Legrady Transmitting Architecture: The Transphysical City by Marcos Novak Transmitting Architecture: The Transphysical City Martin Rieser
ISEA 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking for the Interactive by Barbara London & Grahame Weinbren Into The Black Box - relations between artistic expression and formal descriptions in computer based fiction and art by Jorgen Callesen Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Art of Memory: Ars Memoria, Itoloca and Xujhlimatl by Lily Diaz Interactive Narrative- Educating the Authors by Martin Rieser
ISEA 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the Edge of Dreamland: Media Encounters in Architectural Venues by Glorianna Davenport, Stefan Agamanolis, Brian Bradley, Joe Patadiso, Sammy Spitzer
ISEA 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What Are Dreaming Young Pixels Of? - a pseudo quarrel on "supports" by Georges Sabau Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality by Randall Packer
ISEA 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making Sense of Orai by Roy Ascott Wonderland in Pocket by Gloria Davenport Semiotic Structure And Recombinicity by Ian Whalley The Narrative Edge: reconciling fact and fiction by Annette Weintraub A Map Larger Than the Territory: "La petite Roquette" by Karen O'Rourke
ISEA 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House of Affects Project Correlating Digitally Distributed Narrative to Adaptable spaces by Giorgos Artopoulos & Eduardo Condorcet GPS Film: Not a Moving Picture, A Picture Moving by Scott Hessels Space & Narrative Identity (Upon Spatial and Temporal Heterogeneity and Multiple Narratives) by Klaus Hu Generative System for the Synthesis of Audiovisual Narrative by Iro Laskari & Dimitris Charitos Variable Fiction, a New Literary Genre Questioning Cooperative Writing and Reality Jam by Carole Lipsyc
ISEA 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explorations of Visual Representation: Towards a Language of Movement by Chris Bowman Rupture by David Green
ISEA 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfolding and Unwinding, a Perspective on Generative Narrative by Miguel Carvalhais

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Square Kilometre array – Looking for God' Art in the Age of Big Data by Nigel Jamieson • Database Cinema and Experimental Narrative (Artist Talk) by Jeanne Jo • Moori (Artist Talk) by Haeyoung Kim
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Table 4.3 List of Articles from ISEA Proceeding 1990 – 2012 which use narrative in a manner that can be described as formal.

content. It is clear also there is little evidence of any conflict between the concepts of 'narrative' and 'interaction'. In fact these concepts, often cast as incompatible, are embraced by these practitioners. While this may help underpin the argument for a framework which allows narrative and interaction to be dealt with together, in a context of creative practice, many of the references made in the literature continue to focus on formalist, semiotic, and structural theories which fit somewhat tidily into conservative scholarship used to support practice, as it was indicated previously by Parry. While personal stories and co-authoring of narrative are key ideas for some of the authors and practitioners listed, there appears to be very little in the way of any theories adopted from sociology to help support the discussion of the work.

Other journal publications have however shown some evidence of a deeper academic concern which draws from outside the ordinary scholarship applied in art. In Leonardo, the number of instances of narrative were less overall, comparative to ISEA, but contained arguably more interesting links between art and contemporary narrative scholarship. First, Sundar Sarukkai references the relationship between art and science noting it typically points to one involving 'natural' science rather than social science.

The discourse on art-science has been dominantly influenced by the natural sciences. Whither social science in this articulation? (Sarukkai, 2009, p.106)

However, Sarukkai notes a greater similarity between art and social science in terms of a shared emphasis to be found in their discourses. Narrative is introduced therefore not through the channel of semiotics specifically, but through a wider reference to social science in general.

Themes such as objectivity, truth, evidence, prediction and so on are potentially contentious themes in both art and social science. Discourse on art shares a greater similarity with elements of social science in the emphasis on interpretation, narrative, perspectives and so on. (Ibid.)

While this short editorial article in Leonardo underlines a common ground shared by the social sciences, in which narrative can be located, there are examples in other places where that use of narrative are more specifically anchored. Elizabeth Weissensteiner and Christian Freksa (2012) describe their work by reference to ideas such as ‘conceptual blending’⁹⁶ and related theoretical concepts developed in cognitive psychology. The route between perception (experience) and cognition (interpretation) is discussed by Weissensteiner and Freksa in relation to their interactive computer installation, entitled *Wolkenkuckucksheim* (translated as Cloud-cuckoo-land), developed for the Cognitive Systems Group in the University of Bremen, Germany. Their approach to narrative is one that is generative and is constituted in the mind of the reader.

⁹⁶ Referenced within narratology is work by George Lakoff and Mark Turner who developed ideas around conceptual blending and metaphor which Turner described in *The Literary Mind* TURNER, M. 1996. *The literary mind*, New York, Oxford University Press.

As the mind generates meaning in a comprehensive way, it sets up a body of meaning—a narrative: Perception turns into cognition via a reading process. However, images do not carry fixed meanings. Although the mind creates a narrative when we perceive something, other perceivers create different narratives. (2012, p. 416)

Their recognition of narrative as an activity of the mind is one shared within the human sciences. It is one which identifies narrative as a key methodology in recent decades utilised by social scientists in a quest to understand individuals or communities in their relationship within a wider social ecology⁹⁷. What is important here is that cognitive concepts, including the mental construction of narrative, are not simply a casual or peripheral issue for Weissensteiner and Freksa. Instead, reader centric concepts are a central feature of what it is they are concerned with when they produced this work. They identify the scholarship not only in cognitive science (Freksa's field) but also in literary theory through Reader Response Theory, which has addressed the audiences' position in the reception of literary works. While other articles do deal with mental mapping, metaphor, and cognition as a source of understanding of artworks⁹⁸, such as (Achituv, 2012), they do not display the same reach into literary theory or narrative as that by Weissensteiner and Freksa.

⁹⁷ This can be seen to have originated in the work of Labov LABOV, W. 1972. *Language in the inner city; studies in the Black English vernacular*, Philadelphia,, University of Pennsylvania Press. and later popularised by Riessman RIESSMAN, C. K. 1993. *Narrative analysis*, Newbury Park, CA, Sage Publications. for contemporary researchers such as Andrews ANDREWS, M., SQUIRE, C. & TAMBOUKOU, M. 2013. *Doing narrative research*, Los Angeles, California, SAGE..

⁹⁸

The leaning towards the effort the reader invests in constructing narrative scenarios is important from the perspective of allowing narrative to be utilised as a guiding principle for all kinds of works independent of their mode of interaction with an audience. *Wolkenkuckucksheim* cannot be understood by calling on classic narrative theories which work on exposing story structure, but instead by adapting post structural theories in combination with cognitive theories of metaphor, in an effort to induce the audience's narrative mode of thinking. Weissensteiner and Freksa indicate this to be a clear strategy in their work.

Art is always made of perceptible material. Thus, experiencing art can also be described as a reading process; hence, cognitive theory, when linked with Reader Response Theory [6], helps us to understand how cognition turns perceptions into artistic metaphors. Although cognitive research has not distinguished between everyday and artistic expression, and Reader Response Theory has not made reference to cognitive processes, we will combine the two to trace how *Wolkenkuckucksheim* uses a particular environment to turn scientific theories into experiential metaphors in viewers' minds. (Weissensteiner and Freksa, 2012, p. 416)

This cognitive approach as a method of supporting the rationale behind the making of an artwork advances the way narrative theory can be utilised in contemporary art scholarship. The content presented through the display screens in Weissensteiner and Freksa's piece is not framed by them as narrative content, and so, the displacement of narrative to the mind of the audience points towards the field of cognitive narratology as a legitimate and useful domain to be applied to their creative practice. It also seems to resonate with the way other practitioners

have attempted to conceptualise and articulate narrative as a feature of their work which is not explicitly evident in the visual image, yet somehow there.

Finally, the documents associated with the Narrative in Practice Symposium in London 2011 and 2013 contained the most direct effort to explore how narrative is employed by artists and designers, and in doing so provides promising links to contemporary narratology. The 2013 symposium gathered a range of practitioners together including: Simeon Featherstone; Gyorgyi Galik; Beatrice Galilee; Silvia Grimaldi; Anish Joshi; Gareth Morris & Ulrike Stevens; Katherine Skellon; Charlie Tims; Luise Vormittag; and Dominic Wilcox. Their creative practices are diverse and presented in the event handbook as involving expertise in: museum exhibition design, graphic design, fine art, architecture, craft design, experience or experiential design, and design for branding. A strong common theme that appears to permeate their statements about narrative is strongly related to the constructivist thesis of Jerome Bruner, or narrative as a communication paradigm in the form articulated by Walter Fisher (1984). In this way the practitioner can be regarded as a 'storytelling animal' who cannot avoid narrative, creating products, systems, or spaces that induce participants to engage through narrative thinking or experience. The explicit references to Bruner and Fisher in the symposium handbook tends to foreground experience and cognition, over the structuring content in any fixed storied format, thereby reinforcing the creative practitioner as one who designs objects or experiences that seed narrative thinking. The perspective provided by Silvia Grimaldi, whose PhD project is entitled *Designing Narrative Product Interactions*, provides a clear example:

Narratives help us organise events and make sense of time, empathise with others and move us on an emotional level. Because of this, using an object is not only an experience, it is an interaction and it is narrative in nature. (Hadjilouca et al., 2013, p.6)

The presentation by Dominic Wilcox, a graduate of the Royal College of Art, referenced a number of works in a range of media from staged photographs of absurd inventions to wearable GPS enabled shoes, was supported by the following statement:

People are more interesting than objects. However, it is possible to create narratives about people using existing or imagined objects as a visual language. Each object that surrounds us has its own associations, histories and uses that we all have a shared knowledge of. I try to use these embedded values within objects to create narratives based on my observations about people and their behaviour. (Hadjilouca et al., 2013, p.15)

These practitioner-centred perspectives, like that described in relation to Wolkenkuckucksheim, target the willingness of their audience to mentally participate in the construction of a narrative. The artists and designers assume the role of serving up certain pieces which can allow the reader to begin constructing and assembling the remaining data.

4.5 Summary

When one considers the survey of online material drawn from the Google Alerts, Art Forum, ISEA Proceedings, Leonardo Journal, Narrative & Image, in addition to the statements in Narrative in Practice Symposium, and in conjunction with my practitioner-centric views derived from practice, there is enough evidence to claim that narrative is a significant feature in the work and process of contemporary

creative practitioners. However, with that said there appears also to be insufficient academic language in use to properly identify and describe it. The categories of NU-DIRECT (Discourse), (B) NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance), (C) NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical), and (D) NU-PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View) introduced in this chapter provide one way of segregating the discourse into understandings that are relevant to practitioners. They address a formal perspective which is to do with the physical attributes of the work which include pointers to signal opportunities for narrative interpretation. In this there are also strategies to resist or subvert established narratives. Separately there is also a perspective which is to do with the intentionality of works; what it is the work is about, its content, and how it is interpreted; and by whom.

The three points of significance here are, firstly there is evidence of a basis for a field within art and design practice which is concerned with narrative as an important feature of creative work. However, currently this cannot be described as a field. This is because the interests are diverse and scattered, and there is neither sufficient enough structure or precision in language to describe the way narrative is formulated for use within the cognate disciplines that are related to creative practice. Finally, the academic scholarship that supports the discussion of narrative in creative practice continues to be drawn from conservative sources. The majority of works that were picked up through searches and populated the data set were visual works that could easily be adapted to borrow from existing concepts of narrative in visual art.

As such, it is logical to argue there is a necessity to develop a framework to support practice-based researchers in accounting for how narrative is manifest in their discipline. The NU categories introduced in this chapter help underpin the structure of the framework proposed in the following chapter. However, additional work is required to facilitate modes of practice based on social aesthetics, or micro-social aesthetics, which promote small stories in a way that was discussed in section 2.5 of Chapter 2. This is distinct from the way small personal narrative informs the work of artists operating in a mode that is primarily visual.

In the section 2.5.1 of Chapter 2 about the evolution in practice the point was made that young emerging artists have grown up with digital technology and future artworks are likely to feature increasingly sophisticated behaviours designed to respond to human or environmental inputs. In this context, Claire Bishop's statement that participatory art requires 'new ways of analysing art that are no longer linked solely to visibility' (2012, p.7) should be adapted to the objective of configuring a more precise way of discussing narrative in art. While examples of data-driven or responsive works in the data set were scarce, it is contended here that this does not imply that narrative is irrelevant to such works. Instead it reinforces the view, similar to that expressed by Mieke Bal (2009, p.13), that narrative understanding continues to draw from a what could be regarded as an orthodox set of resources in art history and literature. A recognition that small stories are a part of the experience of narrative in contemporary art and design, requires orthodox academic resources be expanded to include those from the

relevant disciplines in social science. The narrative framework introduced in the following chapter is designed to support this.

Chapter 5 – A Narrative Framework for Creative Practice

5.1 Overview

From the research conducted there is evidence that narrative is important to a considerable proportion of contemporary creative practitioners. In the case of the survey of practitioners done, only two out of forty-four candidates indicated that narrative was not part of their work or practice. However, the same survey also suggested that when asked to account for their knowledge of narrative there was much less confidence in what was understood by narrative generally, and from their perspective as practitioners. A similar pattern could be seen in the analysis of the data set described in chapters 3 and 4. There were abundant instances of narrative used in the interpretation of artworks and exhibitions, but the language surrounding the discussions were largely void of a basis that could be described as academic. The findings were concurrent with what James Elkins has said about narrative being largely under-theorised in studio practice. Also with Steiner's view that the extent of the theorisation of the novel and narrativity has no comparative analogue in the visual arts (Steiner, 1988, p.8). It also reflects Mieke Bal's view about the effectiveness of narratology in exploring the body of narrative artefacts available to it (2009, p.13). In addition to the findings from the literature and qualitative review there was also the experience from my practice. For many years prior to the programme of study, I have used photography as a medium and while narrative surfaced regularly in conversations about the work it was always assumed what that meant.

As a result of the literature review, a familiarity with a broad range of theories was developed which ran across traditional disciplines in literature and film, but also there were those that resulted from the 'narrativist turn' in the humanities previously discussed by Kreiswirth. During the programme the work developed through the methods applied to manually-composed, auto-composed, data-driven, and responsive works, and while photography remained important it became integrated into systems which were automatic and responsive. From this dual approach through the literature review and practice it became possible to sort through a range of narratives theories and see which were applicable to my own practice. However, when the qualitative analysis of the data set was conducted there were discrepancies evident in how I understood narrative could be applied to practice and those understandings produced from the data set.

The categories of NU-DIRECT (Discourse), NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance), NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical), and NU-PERSPECTIVAL (Point of View) only partially overlapped with the understanding I gained from the practice. The categories that came from the data set reflected understandings of art critics or reviewers, curators, and practitioners but much of what was identified by reference to narrative could be classified as visual art, typically operating with a representational or figurative mode. Theses represented the type of work that could be easily served by the limited theorisation there was of narrative in art. Representational paintings or photographs lend themselves to narrative understanding in a way that works such as *Sonic Bed* do not. As Bence Nany has shown it is possible to deal with neoclassical paintings (Jacque-Louis David) in

the same context as modernist photography (Henri Cartier-Bresson). These works contain codes or pointers that allow them to fit neatly with understandings of narrative in NU-DIRECT (Discourse), NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance), NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical). The same could be said of works discussed by Wendy Steiner, Nelson Goodman, and others such as Margarite Hoogvliet all mentioned in the review of literature; works that are safely defined by an academic tradition of speaking about narrative in pictures. While the NU categories were useful to get some sense of how narrative was characterised in the discussion of contemporary art, it was necessary to turn back to the practice to establish a more inclusive structure that could reflect the extended view of narrative introduced in section 2.5 of Chapter 2. A view that encompasses the possibilities for small or personal stories, those provoked by situations or events which have been characterised as micro-social.

In the introduction it was stated that the premise for the framework is based on the position that artefacts do not exclusively tell stories but often:

1. act as conduits for stories;
2. provoke narrative thinking in viewing subjects;
3. respond, behave, intervene, or induce events;
4. produce narrative which is situated (not ubiquitous);
5. make use of the people and spaces as participating narrative elements.

Implicit in each of the statements above is the perception that works act to evoke stories⁹⁹. This seems to be better than insisting on the impossible diegetic task of 'telling' stories for which visual images are not designed. An important point here is that works *act*. That is to say, while they can be regarded as existing to communicate stories, they can also be viewed as being involved in *doing something*. The stories that are elicited in a situation in which an artwork is involved, can be the grand narratives of history or the small stories that make sense of confrontational events produced by an electronic work. In the first instance, we can think of a painting that communicates the coronation of Napoleon. This image cooperates with other media in the communication of a story about a great emperor in an historical period of European colonial expansion. Bence Nanay provides us with an approach for understanding how this image promotes a grand narrative, since the event portrayed is one we are aware of from history. Edward Said's *Orientalism* discussed earlier in Chapter 2 also helps if we can understand the painting being implicated in a wider narrative of European history. Secondly, it is possible for an electronic work to surprise or embarrass someone into action, or inaction. From the discussion given already in the thesis this should be possible to see in works such as *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* (A1.8), or in Chris O'Shea's *Hand From Above*, and Kaffe Matthews' *Sonic Bed*. The *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* invokes a sense of discovery in museum visitors encouraging them to check out the building in a way they previously had not. Chris

⁹⁹ It is important here to preserve the distinction between story and discourse here. Story is used in the sense that it was described in structuralist orientations such as those described by Seymour Chatman. See footnote 81.

O'Shea's work traps people into public performances they would normally do their best to avoid. Kaffe Matthews' work requires the exhibition visitor to lie in a bed in front of, or with, strangers. What is common to these works is that the narratives they invoke are situated, that is they are dependent on the resources available in the situation for the narrative to be perceptible. These situations produce the scenarios that call on narrative to 'air, probe, and otherwise attempt to reconstruct and make sense of actual and possible life experiences' (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.7). The painting of Napoleon's coronation serves the first two of the five functions listed. The work of Chris O'Shea and Kaffe Matthews, as well as the *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* serve all five functions.

Focussing on how works act but also how they are situated provides a different perspective on getting at narrative in practice. As a practitioner it is often necessary to imagine the completion of a project and how it will be eventually situated, even as it is being developed. Designers are often required to do this at the outset in accordance to a brief or specified context, which is typically declared in advance and contracted. Fine artists on the other hand might have more opportunities to work ahead and decide later about venues. However, the work is always situated. For this reason, the situation in which the work acts is a useful way to consider establishing some perspectives for how the narrative elicited by a work might be experienced. Figure 5.1 illustrates five perspectives which provide a context for focussing narrative in practice. The first perspective is focused on the artefact itself and what properties the work has enabling it to direct a narrative. The second casts the artefact as an interface which co-opts the viewer into a cognitive engagement

with the work. The third adopts its nomenclature from Goffman whereby ratified members of a situation cooperate to co-produce interpretations of a work. The surrounding public space in which works are presented constitutes a fourth situation, whereby non-ratified members are part of a wider scene created by the work. Here again, Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor for framing the situation is used. The fifth and final perspective is the practitioner's ontological point of view underlining the artist's role as s/he plans for, designs, and co-ordinates the

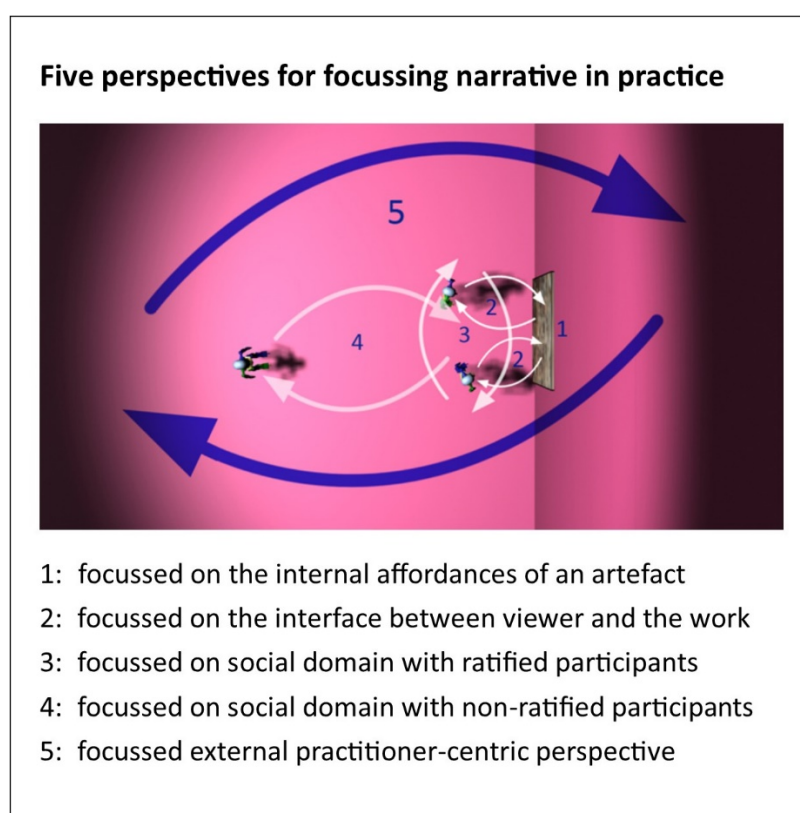


Figure 5.1 Illustration of the five perspectives focussing narrative that underpin the proposed narrative framework

situation. The illustration in Figure 5.1 corresponds to the thinking developed about narrative through the practice but is also draws on what was discovered as part of the qualitative process. Some of these NU categories produced from the data set appear to overlap with the categories here. The most obvious is the apparent correspondence between the NU-DIRECT (Discourse) category and the

first perspective that is focused on the artefact. It is crucial to bear in mind that while both the qualitative and creative methods contributed to the framework the NU categories were derived from what understandings were already available in the public and academic discourse. The categories of the framework function differently in that they aim at establishing links to discourse; in some cases, these links have not been established previously and are not already in use. The framework is proposing new, as well as existing associations which will be described in the following section.

5.2. Naming the framework classifications

The framework is built on the findings from the research and can be understood as operating from the five perspectives which were presented in Figure 5.1. They can be considered five domains for focussing narrative theory on works, thereby providing more theoretical precision than would ordinarily be used in discussions about narrative in contemporary artworks.

In naming the classifications of the framework there were some considerations about how the nomenclature should characterise the perspectives listed in Figure 5.1. Initially the concept of *frame* described by Goffman in *Frame Analysis* (1974 (1986)), and addressed in Chapter 2 section 2.5, seemed to be promising, and in many circumstances the concept can be used successfully. For instance, to experience a work as a history painting can be understood as framing it in the context of a given set of theories, or in line with traditions of compositional interpretation in art history. In this way one is temporarily locked into a view of the work as networked within a set of academic, aesthetic or disciplinary

associations, enabling us to speak about narrative in ways that are relevant to art history but differentiated from approaches understood in literature, or social science. However, a feature of Goffman's conceptualisation of frames is related to their vulnerability. This vulnerability shows itself in situations when frames breaks down. His examples of frame-breaks include accidents, slips, mistakes, and oversights which can result in surprising, embarrassing, humorous, or shocking situations¹⁰⁰. For example, a serious suited businessman is transformed into a humorous subject when he slips on a pavement but recovers to proceed as if nothing happened. Frames therefore present one reality which when penetrated is sometimes impossible to recover. It would be difficult to see an apparently honest accountant who was exposed as a con man as just an accountant again. As such the term *frame* placed some undesirable restrictions on the perspectives of the framework. The perspectives are considered to be more like lenses through which we can access and appreciate creative works, and the significance of a work is narrated through the particular lens we choose. For our purposes here, these might relate to those who design and encode artefacts and those who participate in, experience, or attempt to make sense of them. While I have used the term perspective here, the problem with that is it implies a subjective view-point rather than a theoretical positioning which the framework is proposing. The term

¹⁰⁰ In section 2.5.6 *Goffman and situated practices* the vulnerability of frames was discussed but in relation to the concept of *segregation* where two frames can be available simultaneously.

orientation became preferable as a way of avoiding the exclusivity of frames and subjectivity of perspectives.

Orientation is adapted for its use by M. H. Abrams who used the term in his retrospective summary classification of theories of art (1953). He employed the term to encapsulate the kind of overlapping quality that is inherent, and unavoidable, in critical theory. A concise description of this may help in clarifying the way the narrative framework is intended to operate in supporting the discussion of narrative. The orientation of the theories referred to by Abrams is set out in a model visualised as a simple triangle which is reproduced in Figure 5.2. The triangle itself symbolises ‘the work’ and each of the three corners indicates the particular theoretical orientation. One corner is related to the world or universe; a second, deals with the work in relation to the artist or author; and the third points

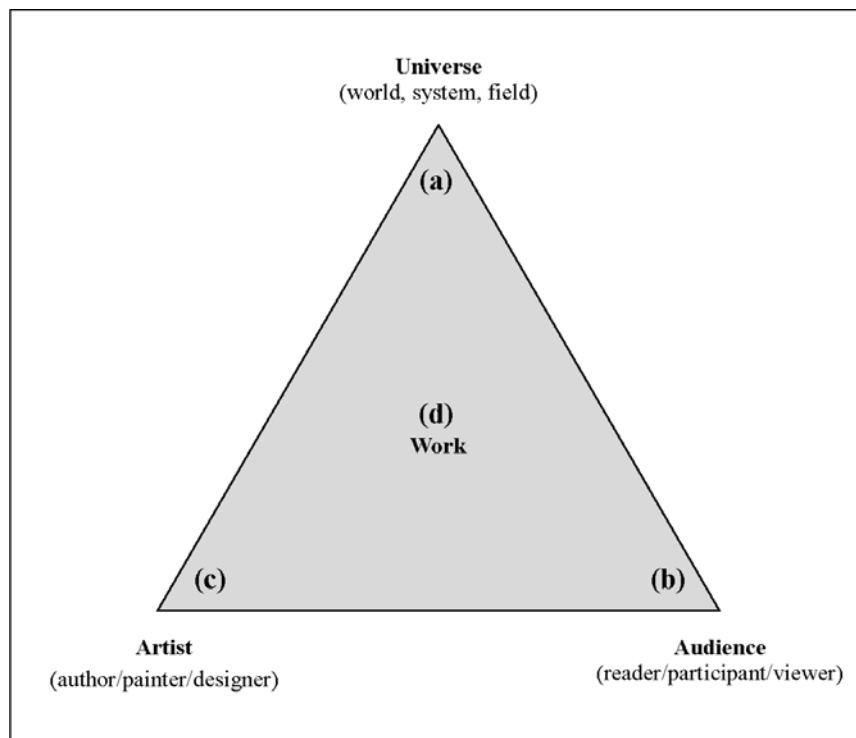


Figure 5.2 M. H. Abrams framework illustrating the orientation of theories of art towards one dominant element

to the audience. The work can be discussed in relation to either of the corners of the triangle which point towards different sets of theories which orient the discussion of the work. The work can also be discussed in isolation or as an object in its own right which would correspond to a tradition of pure aesthetics in mid-twentieth century. About this Abrams states that while any adequate theory accounts for multiple perspectives it is typically oriented towards only one:

Although any reasonably adequate theory takes some account of all four elements, almost all theories, as we shall see, exhibit a discernible orientation toward one only. That is, a critic tends to derive from one of these terms his principal categories for defining, classifying, and analyzing a work of art, as well as the major criteria by which he judges its value. (Abrams, 1953, p.6)

Abrams shows how theories tend to be embedded in, or overlap, with each other rather than being exclusive in their application. For the purposes here, it is difficult to talk about narrative paintings and analyse their specific narrative qualities without straying into how different viewers will interpret them as fictional worlds, *histories*, or scenes from literary fiction. The orientations therefore are necessarily blurred so that they can be discussed as being dominated by tendencies towards one set of theories but not excluded from being considered by reference to others.

In describing the framework, it is important to remember that the categories are not exclusive to each other, they are *orientations* in the way that Abrams makes use of the term. As such, they are intended to facilitate a way of discussing narrative in relation to art and creative practice which is inclusive and extends the discussion of narrative to orientations that can borrow from references in social science which have hitherto not been deemed, either relevant or of sufficient

interest, to the disciplinary interests of contemporary creative practice. The five narrative orientations are named in accordance to how the work is situated in the world, which might be a gallery or museum or presented as an artefact or intervention in an open public space. The orientations are named 1) the domain of the artefact; 2) the artefact as interface; 3) the ratified public domain; 4) the non-ratified public domain; 5) the practitioner-centred domain. Each of these orientations point to a particular set of theories that qualify how the work can be discussed in narrative terms.

5.3 A description of the five narrative orientations

By focussing on the work in terms of its situated context it is possible to consider it as a thing in itself, as an interface, or operating within two types of social situation. In addition, the work is imagined, designed, and developed by a creative practitioner who steers the work through a process before it is presented for publication or exhibition. Considered in this way the work will support different narrative effects which if we recall Kreiswirth, are not ‘the same sorts of things?’ (Kreiswirth, 2000, p. 294). Together these constitute the framework. It is crucial also to remember that one can move between orientations while discussing the same work. For the purposes here, I will discuss works from my practice and examples of others that came up as part of the review of literature and practice. Each of the orientations s are discussed separately in the sections that follow.

5.3.1 Domain of the artefact

Within the domain of the artefact the discussion of narrative is focussed on the work itself. The work is perceived as containing the essential affordances that

enable a story to be retrieved from it. The medium is important since it facilitates ways of communicating which are suitable to the experience of narrative. Visual art prior to the onset of modernist abstraction can be regarded as a prototype for the experience of narrative in this orientation. This is for two reasons, firstly such works typically operate in a representational mode showing figures that are involved in actions which are situated in a world depicted in the image. Here depiction, as it was distinguished from representation by Nanay, is critical since it refers to what is evident in the work. A crown may represent an emperor even if the emperor is not depicted.

The content of the work is important but is typically presented from a perspective where the reader, or audience, is 'idealised' and therefore diminished as an active interpreting subject. Prototypically the artefact will display an important event or action, or alternatively reference extrinsic narrative material which is already available in the world and established culturally, or is accessible to the audience. Events from biblical or literary narratives are common examples of the latter and examples were discussed in Chapter 2. The *Life of Christ* by Hans Memling is a good example where the story of Christ is already available outside the image therefore the depiction of a character understood to be Christ will automatically call on biblical content to assist a narrative reading of the work.

Compositional and structural features of a work are also important, and the gestalt of the work may allow events to be connected through the grouping of elements or by pathways of lines that connect important characters or features. Nelson Goodman has demonstrated how the underlining structure of Memling's work

connects the final events of Christ's life on earth into a sequence that weaves from his capture on the left of the painting to his crucifixion and resurrection on the right ([1980] 1981, pp.108-109).

Alternatively, works may contain direct references to other narrative media such as theatre or film, indicated through the use of dramatic lighting, costume, or setting. It goes without saying these features require a viewer to interpret the works within a narrative frame, but the works show evidence or provide cues, recognised in traditional approaches to narrative art, and therefore lead such interpretations. In the frame of this orientation therefore, one can speak about these narrative cues as techniques, or pointers as I prefer to call them, which are exploited by artists to induce narrative experiences of the work. Many of these techniques are well documented in publications that deal with narrative in art and Wendy Steiner has provided probably the most comprehensive account with regard to pictorial art. Through the analysis of the data set the NU-DIRECT (Discourse) category provides examples of how narrative can be understood to be directed by the artefact itself. The pointer(s) may direct audiences to clear and identifiable stories such as the Life of Christ, or they may resist obvious narrative associations by providing more cryptic cues that reference a narrative medium but leave open the content of the story for interpretation.

Works such as *The Tailor* (A1.4) and outputs from *Tween* (A1.2) were discussed with the NU-DIRECT (Discourse) category in the previous chapter and can be used here again. *The Tailor* has no apparent extrinsic story that it calls on to elucidate its meaning, but there are cues in the image that increase its narrativity,

in the way Werner Wolf¹⁰¹ or Marie-Laure Ryan¹⁰² would discuss the term. There is an accumulation of cues in the work that are designed to coax the reader into experiencing the work narratively. In very general terms there is a world, in which a character appears to be active. Even without the title we could guess his occupation from the presence of the sewing machine and tape measure around his neck. The environment resists any ordinary situation in which we would normally expect a tailor to work, but the dress hanging on the left panel appears important and is connected to his machine through a cabled network. These cues beg the question about what is going on, but do not serve any easy answers leaving the audience to participate in grappling with its meaning. If one were familiar with devices in narrative painting as it was discussed earlier by Wendy Steiner and others referenced in the review of literature the architecture plays a role by employing strategies that were used in early and pre-renaissance paintings. In works such as *Tween* (A1.2) similar elements can be identified in the image, but another is the pattern of horizontal lines that are a consequence of the methods used by software to create the image. These have the appearance of a technical relic from video technology which results from interlaced frames. As such, in

¹⁰¹ Wolf's discussion of narrativity was referenced earlier in relation to the Bence Nanay's essay. In short Wolf used categories of series, multiphase images, and monophase to clarify how narrative could be variably facilitated exclusively by visual media. See footnote 37.

¹⁰² Ryan's conditions of narrative were already referenced in the section 4.3.1 *NU-DIRECT (Discourse)*. See footnote 88.

addition to the pointers *Tween* shares with *The Tailor* (A1.4) the scanlines are another feature of the work that provides a link to time based narrative media.

Theories, analyses, or attitudes which can be brought to bear on the artefact may be based in disciplinary traditions which allow narrative to be constituted in grounds distinct to those in other fields. The case was made in Chapter 2 about the tradition of pictorial narrative discussed in art history which employs a separate set of criteria to the analytic tradition in philosophy of art, or any structural or semiotic position taken in relation to literary texts. Artefacts may come in a diversity of forms such as painting, photography, etching, ceramics, sculpture, theatre performance, or architecture. 3D work extended in space, performance, or architecture can be regarded as special kinds of objects in that they can be looked upon as objects but also interacted with or experienced socially. For instance, we can understand an instance of architectural design as resulting in a building which is significant in historical terms, or as containing elements that explicitly feature narrative. Nigel Coates sees the physical nature of architecture as comparable to the physical object of a book, which sits between the author and the reader (Coates, 2012, p.31). In this orientation that is focused on the artefact, *Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise - East Doors of the Florence Baptistery* as an architectural feature can be discussed in narrative terms (Zucker and Harris, 2014) in a similar way to how the *Column of Trajan* also attracts a narrative treatment (Zucker and Follo, 2012). Regarding performance, the stage frames dramaturgy as a narrative object situated in the theatre setting which is clearly distinct from street theatre, or performance art, which may involve unsuspecting participants in surprising ways. A theatrical

play therefore is comparable to a film as a cultural object performed in a darkened auditorium. Tradition and convention therefore can be seen to frame the notion of an artefact here as opposed to any requirement for an artefact having to be a physical thing, handmade or mass-produced.

5.3.2 Artefact as interface

The second orientation, the *artefact as interface*, can be understood as introducing the viewer or audience into the discourse at an equal footing to the artefact. In this way, the discussion while incorporating aspects of the physical work is heavily engaged with the cognitive activities, emotional status, and cultural attitudes of the reader. The reader is an *interactant* understood to be actively constructing meanings and responding emotionally to the material presented in the work. The reader has a biography which incorporates an individual experience as well as a broader heritage, and belongs to a community, and therefore has attitudes that are inherited or learned. The deeper characterisation of the reader introduces the possibility of dealing with artefacts as dialogic entities; that is, being involved in a conversation with readers. In the first orientation the elements of a work, such as marks, shapes, structures or other features (pointers) are semantic elements left there for the reader to unravel. Narrative is not discussed relative to the internal workings of the artefact *per se*, but produced instead at the interface between individuals and works. Factors such as personal or cultural knowledge, ethnicity, nationality, language, race, gender, sexuality, or the socio-economic status of the reader, can constitute legitimate grounds for understanding readings that emerge from a work at the point of its reception. The mind-set or world-view of the viewer,

which shifts from individual to individual, and from one reading to the next, can be understood to influence the meaning of works and are therefore incorporated into this orientation for consideration.

When dealing with narrative in this orientation it is impossible to disentangle the reader from the text or artefact. However, narratology is not short of theoretical approaches that involve the interaction between narrative artefacts and the recipient. While structuralism may have focused on the writer, poststructuralism brought with it an awareness of the reader's participation in the construction of the text. Barthes distinction between *readerly* and *writerly* texts in S/Z (Barthes and Balzac, 1974) presents the *writerly reader* who is cast in distinction to *classical* reader. A writerly text introduces spaces (gaps) for the reader to participate in filling in the discourse. The reader therefore has greater agency in the construction of the story comparative to the classical reader. The classical reader is cast as unravelling the plot fixed by the author, in an attempt to uncover its intended meaning. The spaces deliberately left open for reader interpretation in writerly texts correspond to the idea of gapping which has been an influential concept on contemporary cognitive narratology. This was introduced in section 4.3.2 around the discussion of the NU-INDIRECT (Discourse) category which recognised narrative resistance to be a strategy employed by artists to complicate the interpretation of a work thereby challenging audiences to reinterpret established narratives. In the same section it was also aligned with the idea of 'roughening the surface' discussed by Victor Shklovsky. The concept of gapping is commonly referenced in reader response criticism (Tompkins, 1980) which developed

through the 1970s. The mid-1980s through the 1990s demonstrated approaches to narrative that built on cognition making use of developments in psychology which had already influenced the development of artificial intelligence a decade earlier. Ideas abounded around possible worlds theory (Bruner, 1986a, Ryan, 1991), prototype theory (Lakoff, 1999) conceptual metaphor and blending (Turner, 1996), and natural narratology (Fludernik, 1996). These approaches helped set the conditions for the emergence of cognitive narratology which continues to be very influential today across disciplines including pictorial narrative (Wolf, 2003b, Nanay, 2009, Ranta, 2013).

As part of the research there was little evidence of cognitive, or reader oriented theories, being accessed by artists to provide a basis for discussing their work from a narrative perspective. An exception was the work by Weissensteiner and Freksa (2012) discussed in section 4.3.3 *NU-INTENTIONAL (Topical)* of the previous chapter. These artists showed how they could call on Reader Response in articulating how narrative was at play in their interactive piece realised for the Cognitive Systems Group at the University of Bremen, Germany (p.416). A deeper study of the adaptation of reader oriented theories of narrative to art and design is warranted. While these artists were an exception there were other places noted where cognitive and reader-centred theories of narrative would have aided the understanding of works. This was noted in relation to Bence Nanay's interpretation of 'action' and the things we should be aware of when looking at images in his

essay on Narrative Picture¹⁰³ in Chapter 2. A similar observation was made in relation to articles found in the Narrative & Image Journal, for example Mary O'Neill's interpretation of objects as conduits for stories was mentioned in Chapter 4, section 4.4.2 *Survey of academic resources*.

Regarding my own practice, the works discussed under the domain of the artefact, are equally open to being interrogated using cognitive theories. Since I, like many other artists, resist narrative by deliberately designing works to hold back information that would otherwise allow a reader to easily decode its meaning. In an analogous way to how Monika Fludernik has used Jerome Bruner (narrative mode of thought) and Jonathan Culler (gapping) to establish her theory of natural narratology, and which allows James Joyce's work to be incorporated into narratology for analysis¹⁰⁴. As a practitioner, I too can work off a similar line of thinking to help clarify how narrative is at play in works that resist traditional or classic narrative assumptions.

5.3.3 Ratified public domain

The ratified public domain can be understood as again involving the reader interacting with the work but is distinguished from the artefact as interface orientation in that the reader is recast as a collaborating actor. The relationship between artefacts and people is characterised not as a dialogue between two

¹⁰³ See specifically pp. 66-67 of the section 2.4.2 *Three approaches to naming art as narrative*.

¹⁰⁴ Monika Fludernik was introduced several times throughout the thesis but in section 4.3.2 *NU-INDIRECT (Narrative Resistance)* in reference to the concept of gapping as it related to the discussion in that section.

entities but accounts for the fact that often people interpret works in a way that involves cooperation or input from others. The museum and art gallery are public, social, and recreational spaces and the reader is often not alone in decoding, interpreting, or appreciating a work. Instead people often engage with artefacts in the presence of friends, colleagues, or acquaintances, sometimes in pairs or groups; in what Goffman has called a social gathering. Their experience of a work in these situations can be negotiated with other 'ratified' members of the social gathering.

As introduced in Chapter 2, section 2.5.4 *Micro-social aesthetics and small stories*, the term 'ratified', as it is used by Goffman, relates to people who openly subscribe to an interaction. A conversation between two acquaintances is probably the simplest example. But core to its meaning is that people consciously consent to engaging with another party, and in a museum or gallery this could involve discussing a work in the presence of docent. In this situation the experience of a work can be coloured by the nature of the relationship between the reading partners which could be friendly, familial, educational or professional. The social occasion can therefore be said to play a role in the way meanings about the work are retrieved or constructed at the site of reception. There is also relevance here for the process by which artists or designers may work, collaborate or share the production of a work.

When assuming a view about how narrative may be relevant in this orientation, the co-constructive techniques used to unravel unusual, unexpected, or apparently illogical events in everyday life point to a valid source of academic reference. This was discussed in section 2.5.4, in relation to how 'conversational interaction

realizes the essential function of personal narrative' and 'make sense of actual and possible life experiences' (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.7). The 'narrativist turn' mentioned by Kreiswirth has by today produced a field within sociology that uses narrative as a qualitative framework to investigate people's attitudes, or the methods by which people apply significance to certain events over others. Corinne Squire, Molly Andrews, and Maria Tamboukou in *Doing Narrative Research*, summarise a form of narrative research in sociology which addresses co-constructed narratives as one of three established methods in their field (Andrews et al., 2008 (2013), p.5). Ochs and Capps also provide an outline of the dimensions and possibilities for co-constructed narratives. There are multiple active co-tellers involved; the tellability of accounts may be low to moderate; the narration is typically embedded in normal turn-taking structures of ordinary conversational exchange; accounts are temporally and causally disordered (non-linear); and the moral stance of tellers tends to be fluid as the account unfolds (Ochs and Capps, 2001, pp.18-24).

A useful example that crosses film-making with sociology was in a study written by Deborah Tannen (Tannen, 1979 (1993)) where a short film was developed with ambiguous causal connections designed deliberately to expose the cultural expectations of subjects from different countries (American and Greek). Using definitions of the concept of frame, derived in part from Erving Goffman, Tannen analysed how subjects retold events shown in the film to others who had not seen it. The study revealed how individuals selected and emphasised different events, and constructed different connections between events. These were sometimes

based on assumed moral values and expectations established through the participants' cultural orientation. While in Tannen's study the accounts of the events in the film are represented (or reconstructed) by one individual to another there is a sense that the way the events are retold give narrative expression to an internalised view of the social world which is one shared and learned within cultures. In this way ideas are negotiated into a structured account that appears to best explain conflicting or unfamiliar phenomena confronting people in everyday situations.

This aspect of the framework is essentially concerned with how meaning can evolve through dialogue. From the perspective of art and design we can then speak about narrative as a method of constructing meaning. Grant H. Kester has already been mentioned as one who has championed dialogic aesthetics (Kester, 2004). Electronic art has since its inception has been developed through collaboration or shared authorship. The work of E.A.T. was mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.5.1 *The evolution in practice*, and captured in the data set is a paper by Roy Ascott's from the 2002 ISEA Proceedings (Ascott, 2002) which discusses a project entitled *La Plissure du Texte* which used narrative as a means of achieving shared authorship via telematic communication with artists located in other countries¹⁰⁵. With respect to the work conducted as part of the research project this orientation towards narrative appeared prominently in the development of the work *Probe* (A1.6). The collaboration with Mark Cullen required many meetings and dialogues which essentially unfolded a story about the work which was connected to the topic

¹⁰⁵ Ascott's paper entitled *Making Sense of Orai* was listed in Table 4.3

of the ‘Voyager Golden Records’ selected by Carl Sagan in 1977 for NASA, discussed in Chapter 3, in section 3.2.4. The physical design of the sculpture and the electronic layer was guided by this shared narrative understanding of the work in process. In another way the organisation and curation of the Boundary Works I exhibition in 2010 provided some interesting examples of co-constructing narratives works for the exhibition. The example of images by Dr. Aidan Coffey & Dr. Jim O'Mahony entitled *Lactobacillus Brevis Phage* was negotiated before being developed into a narrative sequence to be displayed in the exhibition. The dialogue produced a story of a virus which communicated the research they were doing but found it difficult to explain. This work was referenced previously in section 3.2.3 and is documented in Appendix 2.

This orientation of the framework sets no requirement for artefacts to be narrative artworks since the interest in narrative is embedded in ordinary linguistic interactions which support the process of design and development of the final work. The orientation points mainly to a methodology by which artists or designers, in a way described by Kester, can be integrated into the process of making works. In this regard, there is a significant corpus of research within sociology some of which is referenced above which can support how it might be applied to the needs of creative practitioners.

5.3.4 Non-ratified public domain

The *non-ratified public domain* is an orientation also heavily tinted by social interaction, but more emphasis is placed on the public nature of the space in which the engagements with work occurs. The idea of public space requires some

consideration. Personal space, even when in public, can be considered private in the sense that there are conventions that govern personal boundaries and the conditions that make them acceptable to be crossed. Erving Goffman is important here since his work was dedicated to addressing how social codes have significance in everyday situations and how individuals, acquainted or unacquainted, have different obligations to each other in public situations. For example, standing close to others in public will be read differently depending on the relationships people have. There are social rules which people, of the same or similar cultures, have an established knowledge of and which coordinate and guide their everyday interactions with others. These rules can be brought into focus or remain subconscious depending on the circumstances of a given occasion.

Electronic works that have the capability to respond to their environments have some agency to invoke social rules for aesthetic effect. Goffman's work in dealing with social 'dramaturgy' and the shifting roles people adopt in their ongoing attention to 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959 (1971)) has described many of the strategies employed by people to prevent any penetration of their public *performed self*. The sympathetic characterisation of ordinary people as 'performers' monitoring any potential disruption to impressions of themselves makes his work, and projects influenced by his work, attractive to this study. This has been addressed in some detail in Chapter 2, section 2.5.5 and 2.5.6.

The non-ratified public domain is concerned with the space where people are present with artworks and where artefacts have some form of responsive agency. It provides a frame to look at the role narrative plays in making sense of

interactions between people, and between people and objects. It is possible to see traditional works, for example history paintings, invite us to respect the viewing position other people take up to experience a work. And museums which house history paintings understand that we will remain quiet so our fellow visitors can appreciate these works in our presence. Only when these rules are breached do we become conscious of them. In other cases, such as with responsive works creative practitioners may intentionally play with these social conventions of viewing and experiencing, or participating with, contemporary works. People unacquainted with each other may be brought into contact with each other as 'non-ratified' partners. Works considered in this way can be understood as producing interventions, or inducing a form of cooperation between people, which they may not have desired but nevertheless would describe as significant, engaging, or aesthetically pleasing.

Goffman has referred to situations that arise when a frame breaks down as a 'scene being created' and such circumstances can result in people being inadvertently made the centre of attention. There are works, which it could be argued, are designed to generate frame breaks which bring about a situation regarded as having a high degree of tellability. Interesting, unusual, or shocking events which occur against a backdrop of routine everyday life are highly reportable particularly when one is brought into focus by them. Stumbling into a street where Chris O'Shea's *Hand from Above* (2009) is on show and discovering you have become an unsuspecting protagonist in a large public screening is an example Goffman would have been happy to use when explaining the difference between unfocussed to

focussed behaviour. O'Sheas work, intentionally or not, makes use of this social rule as a way of entrapping unsuspecting passers-by (non-ratified participants) into a public presentation where the framed self-image is suddenly made vulnerable.

Marie Sester's ACCESS (2003) is another example of a work which successfully involves non-ratified members of the public to participate in what could be fairly described as an episode of social drama. Sester's work, referred to in Chapter 2, used camera tracking to place a spotlight on museum visitors and keep it on them as they moved through the space. Other works mentioned previously which could be considered in this orientation are Scott Snibbe's *Boundary Functions* (Snibbe, 1998) or Kaffe Matthews' *Sonic Bed* (2005). Other artists' works cited by Peter Dalsgaard's in the paper *Performing Perception - Staging the Aesthetics of Interaction* (Dalsgaard and Hansen, 2008) which was discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5.6, are also relevant here.

Works of mine produced as part of the programme that made use of this particular orientation were *Trails* (A1.5) and *Probe* (A1.6). Observations were made of the work in public and the resistance passers-by had to interact with the work may have been explained by what Goffman has said about people preference to remain unfocussed in public environments.

5.3.5 Practitioner-centric domain

The *practitioner-centric domain* is best described as a 'meta-orientation'. It encapsulates all the previous orientations and makes use of these as resources for the creative practitioner. The practitioner may adopt a role of choreographing the

space or situation. The domain of the artefact might traditionally constitute resources such as paint, ink, film, collage, or 3D materials such as stone, wood, or metal, but the resources associated with the practitioner-centric frame can be expanded to include architectural spaces, people, and responsive works, that behave or respond to changing conditions. The craft involved in making successful work therefore requires knowledge of the media utilised within the situation which includes knowledge from cognitive psychology, social psychology, anthropology, HCI, or other fields that can support the design of interruptions, or frame breaks, conducive to the *scene being created*. The social rules that govern public spaces then can be drafted in as part of a coordinated effort by the practitioner to manipulate these elements in a way that produces an aesthetic effect. Katja Kwastek in her excellent treatment of the aesthetics of interaction (Kwastek, 2013) shows great sensitivity to the role of social theory and methods in the development of responsive works. Both the audience and other elements of the work, analogue or digital features, can be regarded as engaged in an interaction that has an aesthetic goal. Neither has priority or dominance over the other but must be coordinated in such a way that makes for an engaging, interesting, or socially aesthetic experience (micro-social).

This meta-orientation guides what the practitioner is sensitive to as an external narrator of the social occasion. Even in instances where a practitioner is embodied fully in the occasion, for instance in a performance work, s/he may continue to monitor and respond to events that form as the occasion develops. The practitioner-centric meta-orientation casts the creative practitioner as both creator and host to

the situation. There first may be an aesthetic intention, then a trailing goal to control and facilitate a social situation designed to produce an aesthetic result.

The practitioner centred orientation though is one that is private to the practitioner, and one that can mix and blend the orientations described in the previous four sections. It has access to all the resources described in the previous orientations. The practitioner-centred domain also makes use of narrative as a way of guiding the process of the development of a work. In the section 3.2.1 the creative methods associated with manually composed works were showed how a story could evolve through the course of making it. *The Tailor* (A1.4) was one such example. This was a process common in works produced prior to the study period and given as examples in the same section. In addition to these manually-composed works others such as the *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* (A1.8) can be identified as good examples where narrative is weak from the perspective of the viewer's experience but critical to the process.

5.4 An object-to-social classification

In section 2.5.1 it was stated that it was important to note the evolution in practice when extending the ground for a broader understanding of narrative in art and design. It was discussed how the introduction of digital technologies into the living environment motivated studies of how people engage with, or act around, computer based technologies. For example, it was mentioned how human factors became more important from the late 1980s in HCI and CSCW and drew on sociology and anthropology in addition to the existing support from cognitive

psychology. A paper entitled *The Artwork Reaches Out* (Green, 2010)¹⁰⁶ argued a comparable development was recognisable within art practice where artworks had moved from being defined in terms of inherent 'individual' or 'pure' aesthetic properties to how they relate or behave in response to a changing environment or situation. The seeds of this interpretation were most explicit in Jack Burnham's popular 1968 paper entitled *System Esthetics* (1968), written in a period when electronic technology and art practice merged in collaborations such as those in Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T). A different socially oriented attitude towards the art object was evident:

A "sculpture" that physically reacts to its environment is no longer to be regarded as an object. The range of outside factors affecting it, as well as its own radius of action, reach beyond the space it materially occupies. It thus merges with the environment in a relationship that is better understood as a "system" of interdependent processes. (Burnham, 1968)

Art practices back through the twentieth century have experimented with methods of introducing work into the audience's space or have relied on the audience's participation for the work to operate effectively and this has been noted in relation to the work of Claire Bishop. It was also expanded throughout section 2.5 which dealt with concepts relating to social aesthetics. Bringing the audience within the scope of the work therefore is neither a recent development nor an effect of technology. The advent of electronic technologies has nevertheless brought with it the possibility that works can be designed to engage an audience in the way that shares some of the face-to-face features that mark engagements between people.

¹⁰⁶ See footnote 49.

Erving Goffman's work has been presented as an insightful resource for artists and designers as was already discussed with regard to Chris O'Shea's *Hand From Above* and in Dalsgaard and Hansen's research (Dalsgaard and Hansen, 2008). In addition, Goffman has been presented in Chapter 2 as providing an academic bridge for those working with electronic, responsive, or data-driven methods and the idea of small stories, as they were characterised in *Living Narrative* by Ochs and Capps (Ochs and Capps, 2001).

While small stories are at play in works using media traditionally associated with pictorial narrative the way narrative was presented in the third and fourth orientations of the framework require drastically different academic resources for their support. For example, the reference to Amy Casey's work in section 4.4.1 has an accompanying quotation from the artist where she states her cities are shaped by 'everyday observations' (Casey, 2014). Casey is working with the content of everyday life and is doing this through representational painting which has an identifiable history in art as shown to us by those such as Wendy Steiner. In this way it is possible to segregate the understanding of narrative in practices that can be usefully discussed in relation the existing theorisation of narrative in art as it was presented in section 2.4 of the literature review, from that where social science becomes the better fit. As Kreiswirth has implied, these are not 'the same sorts of things' (2000, p. 294) and as Peter Lamarque has noted any reasonable application of a narrative should give priority to 'locating it in a practice.' (Lamarque, 2004, p.401). As such a secondary classification within the framework is required to differentiate what can already be discussed by reference to existing theorisation of

narrative, which here could be referred to as *orthodox* resources for narrative, from that which relies on issues of everyday sociality as the basis for its academic linkage, which could be referred to as *sociological* resources for narrative.

This secondary classification which is illustrated in Figure 5.3 reorders the five orientations of the framework into three distinct classes. The first two orientations

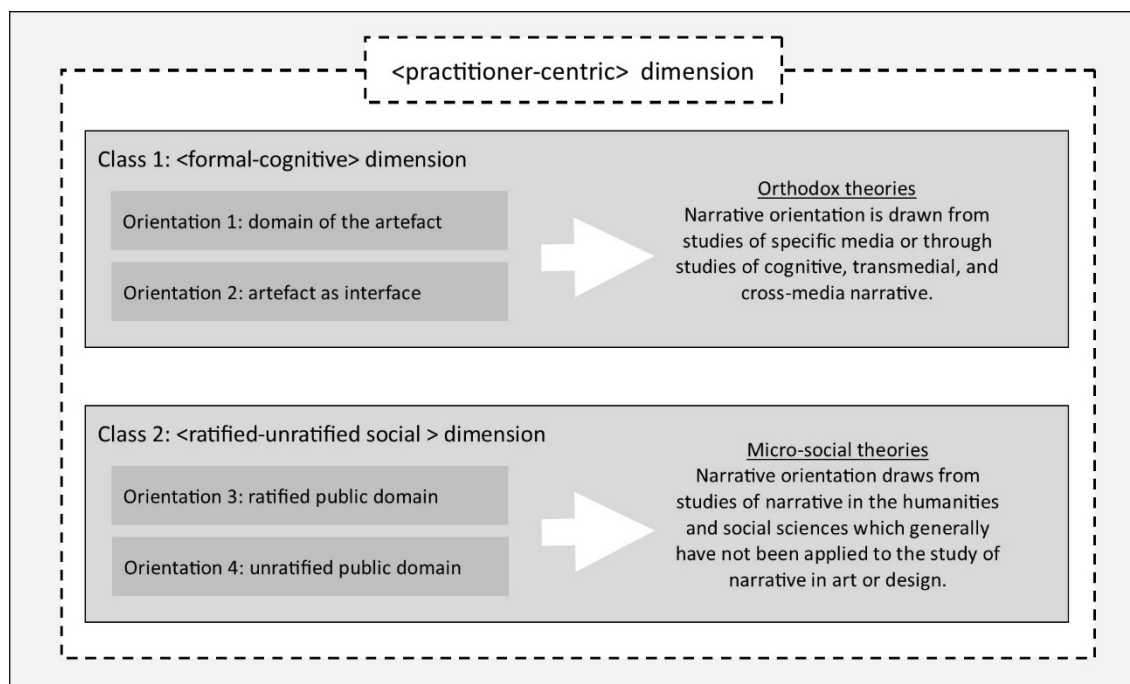


Figure 5.3 illustrates the overarching practitioner-centred perspective containing two classes – the **<formal-cognitive> dimension** and the **<ratified-nonratified social> dimension**. These in turn classify the four orientations of the proposed framework. The first two orientations as indicated by the class name are point at narratological perspectives that have been treated in relation to formal and cognitive theories. Orientations 3 and 4 point at theories derived from micro-social studies in sociology which facilitate small stories.

of the framework are gathered into a class called the **<formal-cognitive> dimension** and the third and fourth orientations are drawn together in a class named the **<ratified-nonratified social> dimension**. Since the framework functions to support the role of narrative in creative practice all the frames are focalised through the perspective of the practitioner. Both classes therefore are within the scope of the **<practitioner-centric> dimension**. These classes are relevant in the sense that the orientations of the framework are not exclusive; that is, the narrative

understanding related to a work is never locked into a particular orientation. Practitioners from time to time may re-evaluate the work and adjust their attitude and understanding to how narrative may be at play in the work. A fine arts practitioner after more than one exhibition may have another perception of how narrative is available for discussion. Despite this, there will be a tendency to see a narrative orientation associated with works as correlated with one class or the other. Some of my early photographic works, discussed section 3.2.1 *Creative methods: manually-composed work*, may be regarded as prototypical of an understanding of narrative that is associated with the *domain of the artefact*. Their narrative orientation can make them favourable for interpretation within the scope of the artefact as interface, but is unlikely to produce the kind of experiences to make them licit for discussion within the *non-ratified social* orientation.

In the description of the orientations of the framework some examples were given to help clarify how narrative understanding, associated with specific works, might be located within a specific orientation. To help emphasise the nature of the orientations as preferences for narrative understanding rather than fixed categories, some individual works are charted against the orientations of the framework in Figure 6.4¹⁰⁷. The sense of narrative associated with each of the works can be

¹⁰⁷ The idea of preference rules for narrative understanding is an idea adapted from David Herman's 'Typology of preference rankings for action representations in narrative' which was illustrated in chapter 2 of Story Logic HERMAN, D. 2002. *Story logic : problems and possibilities of narrative*, Lincoln, Neb, University of Nebraska Press.. In this he showed how action representations might be differently distributed depending on the genre in question. The genres he gave as examples were the News Report, the Realistic Novel, and the Psychological Novel. No correlation is being made here with genres just that the sliding scale he used was a useful way of illustrating the flexibility of the frameworks orientations. Herman's work is also referenced in footnote 20.

discussed along a continuous spectrum that runs from orthodox narrative approaches to perspectives on narrative that are socially embedded. A practice

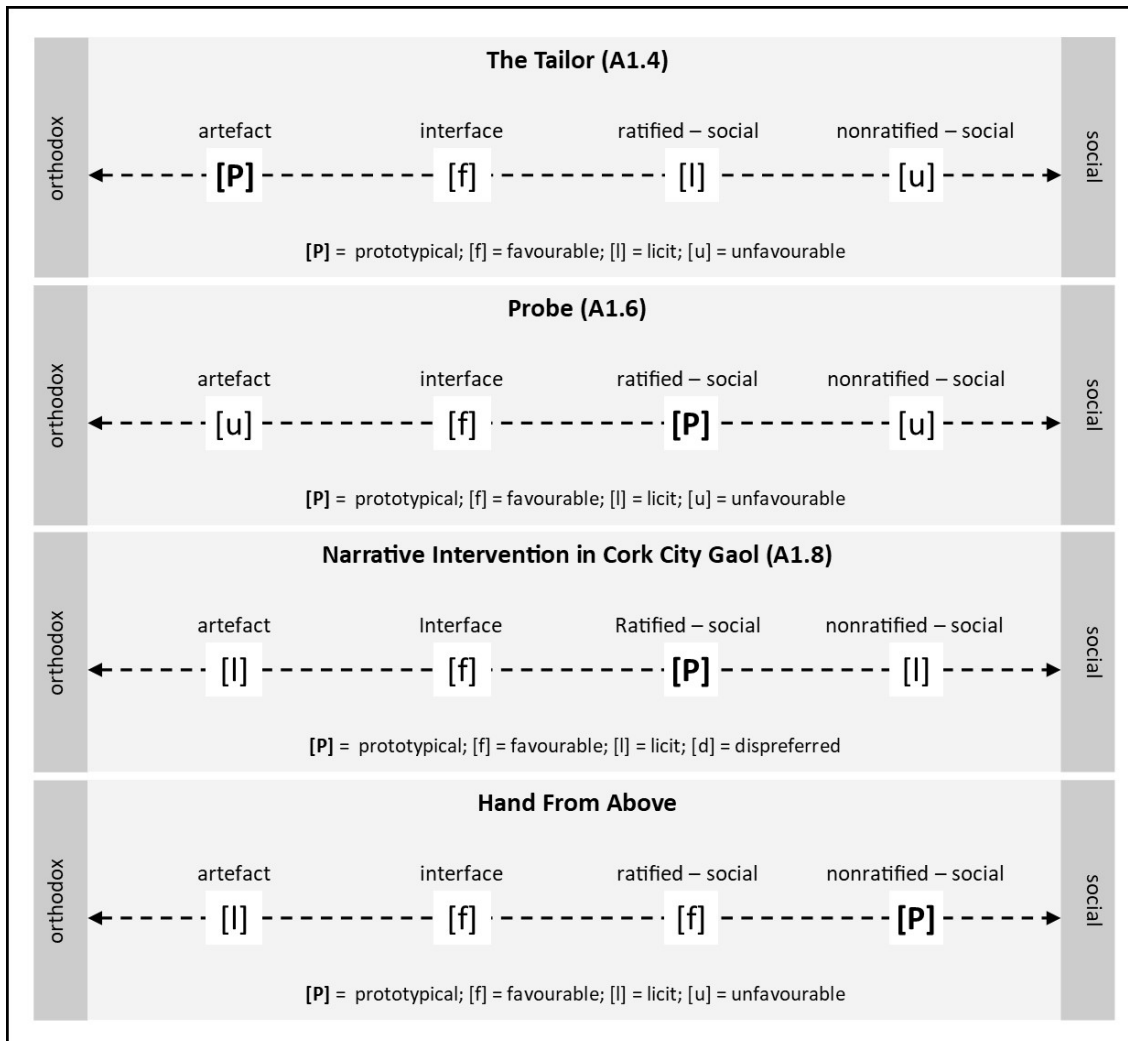


Figure 5.4 Individual works set against the orientations of the framework as preferences for narrative understanding. The narrative understanding associated with works can be graded in accordance to prototypical [P]; favourable [f]; licit [l]; and unfavourable [u] preferences.

based researcher can take a position in relation to the discussion of narrative in their work by plotting preferences along the spectrum which lines up with specific orientations. How narrative can be associated with *The Tailor* (A1.4), from my perspective as the producer of the work, can be considered from several orientations. The composition demonstrates many of the key features found in the discussion of narrative art such as architectural framing, a key figure is at work on

the right of the composition, and there is some connection to be made between him a dress that hangs in the frame on the left. This work therefore makes use of techniques recognisable in narrative art and the evidence of these techniques are present in the picture. The work however is not associated with any extrinsic recognisable story and cannot rely on any explicit references to ground its plot. Therefore, the kind of theorisation brought to pictures by cognitive narratological approaches can also be co-opted in helping to theorise the psychological gap-filling activities which will typically be supplied by the reader/viewer. In this way, I would regard this work to be prototypical [P] of pictorial narrative but also highly favourable [f] from a cognitive narratological perspective. While there was some collaboration with Dr. Paul Walsh in the making of the piece this did not involve much in the way of narrative dialogue and so this orientation is licit [l] rather than unfavourable. By speaking about narrative as it is connected to the work in this way it is then possible to be precise about which theories of narrative can be engaged in the explanation of the work. The benefit of this from an academic position is that it facilitates a discussion about narrative, which allows the work to be positioned post-hoc in the wider discourse of narratology without impacting on the intuitive processes necessary for artists and designers to develop creative projects. The theory does not get in the way of the practice. The other works named in Figure 5.4 use different orientations. *Probe* (A1.6) for example used narrative as a support for the collaboration, but the work itself is unfavourable [u] to be regarded as a narrative artwork, or to produce the kind of social impact suitable for consideration with the orientation of the non-ratified public domain. The *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* (A1.8) might be regarded as prototypical of a work

that used ratified-social orientation since it allowed people to discover a work together where they negotiated why it was there and if there were more hidden within the museum setting. Chris O'Shea's *Hand From Above* by is suitable for consideration where micro social aesthetics are present but other orientations are less preferable.

Organising the way narrative can be discussed with regard to art and design works into discreet orientations is useful in that it facilitates a segregation of academic resources in disciplinary classes that can be utilised by creative practitioners without them have to think about the practice itself in a modularised way. Freedom to make choices intuitively without restriction is a critical part of the process of creative production which is sometimes compromised when having to theorise the work as part of an academic defence. The orientations of the framework and the secondary classes that have been described above are proposals aimed at segregating narrative theory without negatively impacting the process important for successful practice.

5.5 Summary

This chapter introduced and described the narrative framework which is proposed as a support to help creative practice-based researchers who have an explicit interest in narrative in their work. In naming the elements of the framework the term *orientation* was preferred over *frame* or *perspective*, and M.H. Abrams was introduced to justify that choice. This was designed to support an understanding of how the framework could operate in flexible way to link with academic narrative fields as they are appropriate to the practice.

Following that each of the orientations were named and a detailed description was provided with the support of examples from the review of literature and practice, the data set, and from works of mine produced as part of the programme of study. The framework has five orientations which point to different classes of narrative theory. These were named: the *domain of the artefact*; the *artefact as interface*; the *ratified public domain*; the *non-ratified public domain*; and the *practitioner-centred domain*. Depending on the nature of the practice different orientations can be used to interrogate the application of narrative in the work. The important point was also made that the flexibility of the framework was essential, and that a single work could be discussed from the perspective of more than one orientation.

The framework is intended to bring more precision to how narrative is discussed in relation to contemporary practice but also to help extend the academic ground for understanding how narrative may have specific relevance to the kind of work contemporary creative practitioners develop. Having described the five orientations, a secondary classification was established to segregate *orthodox* academic resources from other resources not typically regarded as cognate to art and design practice, yet relevant in some cases. Artefacts considered within the <formal-cognitive> class are largely uncontroversial and have gained some place within the existing theorisation shared with narratology as noted in Chapter 2, section 2.4. On the other hand, very little has been discussed in relation to works classified in the <ratified-nonratified social> dimension. Sociality is a central characteristic of the <ratified-nonratified social> dimension and as such will

understandably draw from social disciplines that foreground the dramaturgies of everyday life which are negotiated through the methodology of small stories.

To complete the chapter a demonstration of the framework was applied to five sample works. Four of these were from my practice, the last was Chris O'Shea's *Hand From Above*. The examples were illustrated with the help of diagram using a technique adapted from David Herman and modified for purpose of here. This completed the description of the framework. The following chapter will move to conclude the thesis.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

This research project was aimed at studio practitioners from schools of art who are engaged in research and believe narrative to be an important part of their work or process. While it was envisaged the outcomes from this research would be of value to practitioners in art and design, since there is common ground between the disciplines, it was also made clear my primary and master's educational was in fine art, so much of the thinking was oriented towards understandings derived from that discipline.

The problem that was outlined at the outset of the study related to the perceived absence of creative practitioner-centred perspectives on narrative in the general literature on narrative. This was presented not as a problem for creative practitioners *per se* but those engaged in research, and obliged to defend their work in academic settings. If the existing narrative scholarship does not sufficiently represent the knowledge creative practitioners develop, then how are they to be supported in defending their own work academically. This is a problem more pointed when one considers the rise in practice based PhD programmes. The project therefore aimed to provide a structured way of thinking about narrative which was intended to contribute to the development of scholarship in the creative arts.

While the study of narrative is dominated by fields relating to language and literary art, the initiation of narratology was justified in claims about its ubiquity; being

there everywhere 'like life itself' (Barthes, 1977 (1966)). The absence of a voice on narrative from contemporary creative practice seemed peculiar since the explosion of interest in narrative across other disciplines outside the literary arts was evident from the late nineteen seventies, in what Martin Kreiswirth referred to as the 'narrativist turn' (Kreiswirth, 2000). The central research question was dependent on whether narrative was relevant in contemporary art practice at all. If so, then where was the evidence of that, and how could it be identified and described? The central research question was formed as follows:

How is it possible to support the creative arts practitioner doing postgraduate research in articulating their position on narrative, relevant to their practice, in a way that is congruent with scholarship in art and contributes to a general academic scholarship on narrative.

The thesis addressed these questions in order. My interest in narrative, emerging from practice, motivated the study. However, it was not easy to find definitions that corresponded with how I felt it operated in my work. In addition, my interest did not constitute evidence of a wider disciplinary interest. The literature review aimed to establish knowledge about contemporary narrative generally and to discover where it was registered in the discourse on the visual and contemporary art. Some accounts suggested a wider interest in narrative was inconsequential and essentially a dead issue from the academic perspective of contemporary studio practitioners. The attitude evident within the formal study of narrative, as it is defined by the ISSN and its European network, is overwhelmingly focused on natural language as a prerequisite for narrative enquiry. So, it can be said the

general account of narrative does not support well the inclusion of visual media by itself as a means for telling stories.

The literature review progressed to identify where narrative turned up in relation to the discussion of art, and within that search there were well-considered accounts to be found. Besides James Elkins there were no analyses of narrative directly as it related to contemporary practice. Others discussed included Wendy Steiner's *Pictures of Romance* (Steiner, 1988b) which provides arguably the most comprehensive account for the visual artist to date. There is also W.J.T. Mitchell's *On Narrative* (1981), a collection of essays some of which are directly related to visual art. Nelson Goodman's *Twisted Tales* is a clear example from the volume. More recently Noël Carroll's special fall issue of *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (2009a) contains a collection of perspectives, only two of which deal with visual media. Of these Bence Nanay's *Narrative Pictures* (2009) was discussed. Within the field of art history other important papers included those by Werner Wolf (2003a) and Michael Ranta (2013).

The narrative strategies identified in the discussion of such works appeared transferable to contemporary visual art and the evidence of that was later found in the analysis of the data set described in the chapters 3 and 4. The qualitative review of articles from academic and non-academic sources was based on a data set that was derived from queries about narrative and art which returned a large and suitably broad sample of articles. On narrowing these to relevant sources with the assistance of Nvivo software it was possible then to conduct a thematic analysis of the data set to identify how narrative was understood. Taking this data along with

evidence I found in attending conferences and seminars on narrative it was possible to conclude that narrative was clearly relevant to the work of contemporary practitioners. This was also corroborated by a direct survey of practitioners where 95% regarded narrative to be a feature of their work or practice.

While there was plenty of evidence to be found of narrative being discussed in relation to creative practice the scope of that enquiry appeared to be narrowly focused on certain types of artefacts. From the literature review pictorial narrative, for example, was largely regarded as synonymous with pre- and post-renaissance religious art, while genre and history paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are also popular targets. Within my own practice I recognised narrative in the different modes I used, which resulted in manually-composed, auto-composed, data-driven and responsive works. In forums such as the Narrative in Practice symposium in London there was also evidence of practitioners working across the fine art and design disciplines who declared narrative to be a fundamental part of their practice. However, from the literature review and many of the articles that populated the data set, the understanding of narrative seemed to be largely focussed on traditional approaches to art as representational figurative objects. The evolution in practice discussed in Chapter 2 shows that increasingly creative practitioners operate in modes that are not exclusively visual. Participative practices that grew in the latter half of the twentieth century have often emphasised creative processes over material artefacts and provided a call for a perspective on artistic methods which are to some degree sociological.

By shifting the emphasis away from exclusively visual modes towards creative processes, it was possible to reconsider other models of narrative in narratology which have not typically been regarded as relevant to the discourse about narrative in art. Rather than insisting on the inappropriate assumption that artworks 'tell stories', it was more reasonable to reconsider that position and assume artworks do not necessarily tell stories, but may instead: act as conduits for stories; provoke narrative thinking in an audience or viewing subject; respond, behave, intervene, or induce events that have narrative characteristics; produce narrative which is situated - that is, which can only be understood in the context in which it is experienced; or make use of people and spaces as participating narrative elements.

Casting narrative in this way does not imply that the existing narrative literature was no longer appropriate for contemporary practitioners, just that it served only those operating in a visual mode. For those other practitioners, of which I am one case, working in other modes could be supported with alternative narrative theories that have been in circulation in the social sciences, but rarely applied to the understanding of art. This change of position recognises that narrative operates in separate ways depending on what is in focus for analysis. If it is a representational painting then any discussion of narrative should draw on the appropriate academic material to contextualise, interrogate or explain it. On the other hand, if a work is designed as an intervention in an architectural or public space, or some other activity in the wider social field, then academic work drawn from the social science disciplines which intersects with narrative should not be out of bounds.

The review of literature on narrative conducted as part of the research was initially very broad looking at early structuralist roots and subsequently fields that related to reader oriented theories and more recently, visual narratology, cognitive narratology, natural narratology, narrative across media, and multimodal and interactive narrative. In addition to this, my interest in responsive works coached me in the direction to survey literature on interaction in art and design. Interactive projects from the late nineteen-eighties became interesting in that the social space around computers as technology moved towards ubiquitous and embedded solutions. In HCI and CSCW (Grudin, 1990, Bannon, 1992) the interest in social factors added methods from social anthropology (Suchman, 2007 (1987)) to the approaches adopted in the study of publicly embedded or situated systems. In addition to this, modern sociological theories of the twentieth century were scoped. This served the function in providing a broad yet comprehensive survey of three key areas allowing me to connect social theories to narratology and anchor them in the specific modes and methods I applied within my own practice. I could recognise in my own work the relevant intersections between the disciplines of creative practice, narrative, and sociology, and then apply these to understand how it surfaced and operated through the work. For example, by being sensitive to Jerome Bruner's psychological perspective on narrative thinking, and connecting it to Erving Goffman's social dramaturgy it was easy to see how the concept of small stories, in the way they are described by Ochs and Capps, could be given priority over grand or great narratives in practice. If there is a disciplinary interest in art and design to justify these overlapping ideas, then small stories and the methods by which they are invoked are a legitimate target for research. Recalling

Peter Lamarque's comment: 'In nearly every case, a higher priority should be given to locating a narrative in a practice, thus determining its point and the conventions it follows' (Lamarque, 2004, p.401) it . And while small stories may be unimportant to the disciplinary interests of art historians or literary theorists, they appear to be valuable for some forms of contemporary practice where responsiveness or interventions are an important aspect.

Another outcome which was evident from the analysis of the survey of practitioners and the data set, was to do with the formality of the language in the discussion of narrative in practice. For instance, it was clear from the dataset that the formal lexicon developed over decades in narratology was not in use. Overall the level of formality was found to be variable reinforcing existing views notably by James Elkins, Wendy Steiner, and Mieke Bal, about narrative in visual art being under-theorised. On one hand it appeared uncommon for artists, and indeed many commentators on art, to cite supporting concepts developed through the study of narrative. Nevertheless, there were examples found which could be traced to theoretical influences in literature and social science. These were primarily evident in the academic journals of Leonardo, Narrative & Image, the ISEA proceedings, and references in the talks given at the NIP symposium in 2011 and 2013. This further supported the view that while there was abundant evidence of narrative being important and relevant to contemporary practice, more work was required to help practitioners support the defence of their work in academic contexts.

It is possible to conclude there were three key findings that came from a review of my own practice, from the review of literature and practice, and from the

qualitative research employed in the overall study. First, there was unmistakable evidence that narrative was an important feature in the work of contemporary creative practitioners. Secondly, the term narrative was used mostly in a colloquial way by practitioners, curators, and critics of contemporary art. In many cases no academic or theoretical resources were provided to support the use of narrative or how storytelling could be achieved by contemporary works reviewed or on exhibition. The commentary on the *Storylines* exhibition at the Guggenheim in New York is one example. However even in cases where academic support was imported into the discussion it often did not agree well with what practitioners said about their work. In a smaller amount of cases there were practitioners who incorporated appropriate and sophisticated references, such as Weissensteiner and Freksa and some in the NiP London symposia. Thirdly, the overall literature on visual art only provided a very narrow understanding of how works could invoke narrative and much of this was channelled through interpretive strategies applied to art in very specific modes of visual representation which were very well explained by Wendy Steiner.

On the surface the broad approach to the literature review and the qualitative research may attract criticism because the focus of a PhD project is typically narrow and deep. The specificity of this project is anchored in how the narrative framework provides very specific structure for academic supports for a wide range of works. For me the framework has provided the possibility to discuss my work using three classes: a <practitioner-dimension>, a <formal-cognitive dimension>, and a <ratified-nonratified social dimension>. These classes embed further

orientations which can point to specific theories of narrative which are applicable to the particular work in question. Whether the work operates in a traditional visual mode, for example *The Tailor* (A1.2), whether it is driven by data as is *Pulse* (A1.3), or whether it is a design intervention in an architectural space such as the work in the *Narrative Intervention in Cork City Gaol* (A1.8), is immaterial as the framework can absorb these modes of practice without any difficulty. Without having scoped narratology, sociology, design and art practice in such a broad way at the outset it would not be possible to apply these theoretical lenses to the work. In this way the framework operates as a theoretical filter for the practice aiming to support its academic defence.

A benefit of the framework is that it removes the need to shoehorn theory into practice, or worse to adapt the practice to ill-fitting theories. A contribution of the research is that it foregrounds the possibility of using micro-social aesthetics as a basis for extruding the discussion of narrative in art and design to small stories which are supported by an abundance of academic resources already available within narratology. Having established a way of approaching the theorisation of creative practice using orientations that connect with established narratological concepts, it would be useful for future research to contribute formal dialogue within narratology. In this way there could be some reciprocal benefits. According to Mieke Bal 'most studies of narrative texts are weak precisely in that their authors fail to use adequate descriptive tools'. Collaborating with the existing field of narratology would strengthen the theoretical basis of the framework and provide possibly broader and more robust supports for practitioners doing research in

formal academic settings. If narratology' goal is to understand narrative in all its forms, then the practitioner-centred orientation to narrative is by definition necessary to the success of that agenda.

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Appendix 1 - Description of works

In total there are eight works described and illustrated in this appendix; these are numbered from A1.1 to A1.8. These are listed as follows:

- A1.1 Myth
- A1.2 Tween
- A1.3 Pulse
- A1.4 The Tailor
- A1.5 Family Portrait
- A1.6 Probe
- A1.7 Trails
- A1.8 Narrative Interventions (Cork City Gaol)

The numbering of the illustrations for each of the works is distinguished from the numbering of figures in the main body of the thesis chapters in that the figure label includes the number of the appendix. In this case, Appendix 1 is referenced by ‘A1’ being placed before the figure label, followed by the number of the work and the number of the individual image. For example, the second illustration of the fourth work described below is labelled Figure A1.4.2. In this way each of the figures can be precisely referenced from the main body of the thesis.

A1.1 Myths

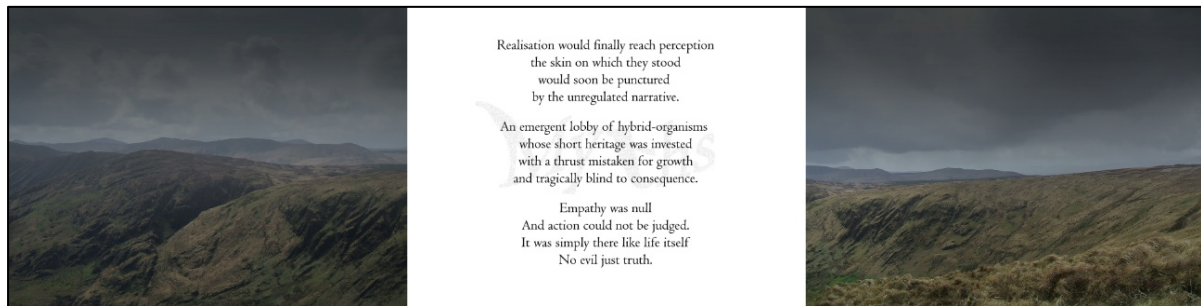


Figure A1.1.1 Myths #1 2008 (Time Lapse video projection with text)

Myths is ongoing work which takes a long-term view of the landscape. While this work may initially be confused with nostalgia for the Irish landscape the work is in fact dealing with recent political attitudes to the environment in the wake of new energy policies that industrialise the rural landscape.

Myth #1 illustrated in Figure 7.1.1 is a linear time-based work that was displayed in three projected panels. The central panel contain textual content in poetic form and deliberately ambiguous. On the panels to the left and right there are two sequences of time-lapse photography which show a landscape apparently unaffected by human intervention. This is suggested through the remoteness of the place and its timeless natural beauty. These landscape views are increasingly threatened because of the growing industrialisation of Irish rural environment supported by planning regulations which are historically weak. The remote scenes photographed above the area around the protected Sillahertane Bog, a national heritage area (NHA), are now replaced with hundreds of acres of industrial wind turbines. Other supposedly protected NHAs within a radius of several kilometres of this place have been re-zoned for similar industrial developments. These include Loch Allua and its surrounding landscape which is

pictured below in Figures A1.1.2 to A1.1.7 and Gougane Barra in Figures A1.1.8 and A1.1.9. Gougane Barra is the source of the River Lee and home of St. Finbarr, the founding father of Cork City and its patron saint. One legend of St. Finbarr claims he banished the great serpent 'Lú' from the lake at Gougane and the struggle left behind the channel of the River Lee which winds its way east through Cork City and on out to its marshy mouth. Gougane Barra is a Christian heritage site of international importance.

While remote and rugged landscape types and places of such cultural importance are ostensibly protected by national and local government development policies these appear to have only limited relevance in the practice of planning. Christian and pre-Christian cultural heritage, as represented in literature on Irish mythology, is also imaginable through remote timeless landscapes that have remained unchanged. There is a sense that the mythologies are themselves threatened by changes to the landscapes proposed under current policies for renewable energy. Mythology and heritage appear to be pitted in a war with 'clean' technologies. This is in fact a battle of narratives where the cultural is reduced to the nostalgic and renewable energy characterised as a pragmatic hero fighting the inevitability of global environmental disaster.

As a long-term project, ongoing, and comprised of a collection of media, such as animation and photographic which focusses on an area called the Upper Lee Valley in Cork County, Ireland. The area is populated with lakes, mountains, ancient forest lands, surrounded by a landscape of ancient intact bog and heathlands. These landscape types support complex ecosystems which developed with early human farming techniques from the Bronze Age. Many of these intact heathlands are now threatened by

contemporary land use and accelerated in recent years by the rezoning of lands for industrial scale windfarms. As a result, they have European protection status under the Habitats Directive. The interpretation of the European Habitats Directive by local and national planning authorities has resulted in a growing threat to these landscapes and the ancient species of flora and fauna they support. Regarding some species, such as Fresh Water Pearl Mussel, these Irish Landscapes type support approx. 80% of the remaining worldwide population. In some cases, therefore it is possible to see these species being threatened with extinction. *Myths* is a work that draws on the irony that is implicit in the renewable energy narrative as it is communicated on behalf of an industry which has become influential because of the rapid growth in the green energy sector. While there can be no dispute about taking responsibility for transitioning to a low carbon economy, the way it is currently being planned for is highly questionable.

Myths is a work which is intended to be exhibited in the conventional environments of the white cube gallery spaces. However, it is also political and focussed on combating poor planning practices. As such, works have been integrated into documentation used to support observations, planning appeals, and high court challenges to high profile industrial planning applications. The methodology that supports this work involves researching environmental and government policy documents, county development plans, individual planning applications, environmental impact statements (EIS) used to assess and inform the planning authorities. These decisions are notoriously politicised as Ireland, along with other European countries seek to meet targets for CO² emissions by 2020 and 2030. Dialogic methods of the kind referred to by Grant Kester and reference in the literature review, were also used in conversations and interviews with

members of local communities, see Figure A1.1.12 below. This information is absorbed before addressing the landscape again as a source of visual rhetoric. As a practitioner I understood the images could be interpreted as traditional and nostalgic identity of Ireland however the work. From a practitioner's perspective however, *Myths* is a work which operates in the confrontation between ancient narratives embedded in cultural heritage (the landscape in this case) and evolving contemporary narratives about technology and their promise as a solution to climate change. Both narratives can be referred to as mythologies since neither gains its rhetorical force by being anchored in scientific facts.



Figure A1.1.2 Myth #2 Loch Allua at daybreak



Figure A1.1.3 Myth #3 Loch Allua at daybreak



Figure A1.1.4 Myth #4 Loch Allua at daybreak



Figure A1.1.5 Myth #5 Loch Allua at daybreak



Figure A1.1.6 Myth #6 Loch Allua in mist



Figure A1.1.7 Myth #7 Loch Allua cold frost



Figure A1.1.8 Myth #8 Eachros



Figure A1.1.9 Myth #9 Maoileann



Figure A1.1.10 Myth #10 Above Gougane Barra



Figure A1.1.11 Myth #11 Above Gougane Barra

The aim of the EIA Directive is to ensure that projects which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment are adequately assessed before they are approved.

Figure A1.1.12 Myth #12 Frame 0:09:14:15 from a ten-minute edited video interview with two family members in a community directly impacted by the introduction of renewable technologies in their local landscape. While the interviewees were happy for the piece to be published neighbours feared any negative reporting would might be indirectly damaging to them. Out of respect to them the work will remain unpublished.

A1.2 Tween



Figure A1.2.1 Example output from Tween 2008 (Online)

Introduction:

‘Tween’ is described as setting out to examine the affordances of new media to generate narrative content automatically and through collaboration. It approaches narrative from the perspective of integrating narrative elements from three main categories: world, character and action. The Tween system takes an image representing each of these elements and randomly blends them in one frame in such a way that suggests the blended frame has been extracted from a transition between scenes in a video sequence. As with other forms of pictorial narrative, in painting for example, these transitions

can be seen as a “pregnant” with narrative possibilities; one where it is possible to construct events on either side of the frame. ‘Tween’ is experimental in the sense that it seeks collaboration from artists and although the work has been initiated by an individual author, ownership is shared between those who are contributing to the database of images. The output from the work may be used, redesigned or exhibited by any participating artist. The system may also be used for introducing narrative methods in creative practice. Since the primary purpose of this artefact is to generate content automatically for the purpose of a study into narrative, the benefit to the author is the accumulation of visual data that can be utilised for analysis of narrative.

The System:

The chart below outlines the basic input/output process of ‘Tween’. Images input by participating artists are blended with potentially any other image in the database and result in an image that will be available for public viewing. The image above in Figure 3.x is an example of what the system generates. The output from the system is simply a blended image which is stored on the server whenever a user reloads a webpage. A new transition, or image, is generated randomly from the images currently stored in the database. The bespoke system is written from scratch using a combination of client side (JavaScript) and server side (PHP) scripts. The chart in Figure 3.x outlines a simple view of the system. Two images are randomly selected from the three categories and these are blended together by copying lines of pixels from each of the images and writing then into a new file that is stored on the the server. A new image is created each the scripts are reloaded. The images are ephemeral in the sense that if they are not saved

the system overwrites the composite image on each click of the mouse. The view the public has of the work is through a webpage -

(<http://notthatreal.com/practice/tween/transitions.php>) - and the event that generates the blended image(s) is the reloading of that webpage. However, the mouse click is a proxy event and the generating event could be taken from any context, such as from a physical space through sensor or camera inputs. Such possibilities have not yet been pursued. Any artist who is contributing to the dataset of images can use the system in any way they wish and any images taken from it can be used for their own purposes.

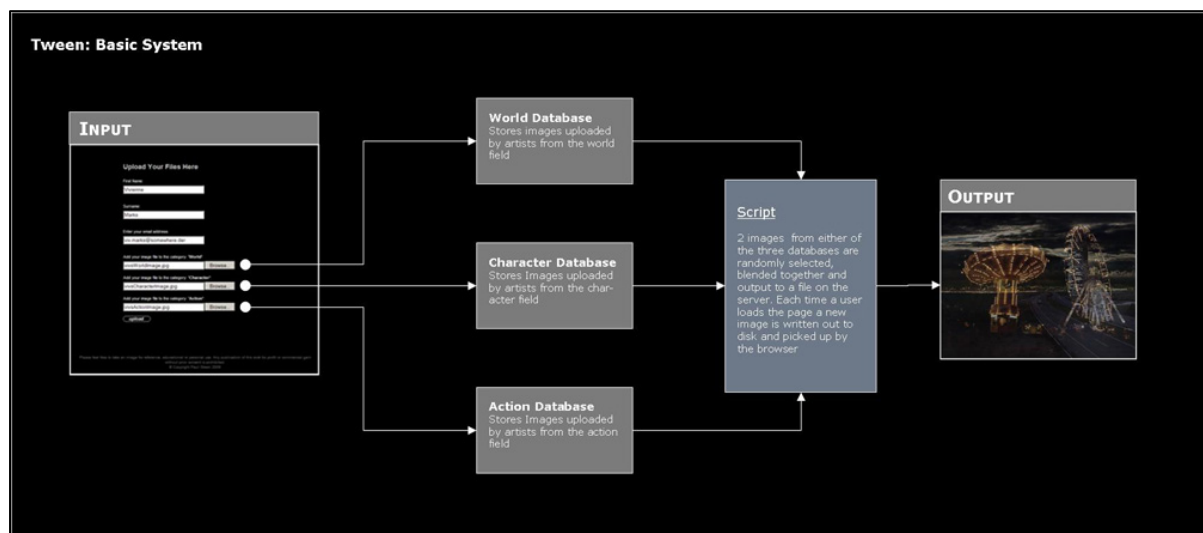


Figure A1.2.2 Tween system 2008 (Online)

Participation:

Guidelines were provided to potential participants and these were published on a website built around the work (<http://notthatreal.com/practice/tween/>). Before uploading any images participants were asked to consider categories for sorting their images. There were three categories: World, Character and Action; which were derived from early reading in particular Marie-Laure Ryan's 'conditions of narrativity' (Ryan, 2006, pp. 8-9). Some guidelines were also provided on the type of images that tend to

work best (e.g. Silhouetted, Textured, etc.). It was intended also that all artists who submit images to the database will be credited for their collaboration wherever the work is exhibited as well as online so please remember you include your full name when submitting images. Regarding any potential ethical risks that might be posed by the work it was made clear that the content is moderated at all times so some delay may be experienced before uploaded images get added to the database. If you have any reservations about the images that you uploaded, please contact me and I will respond as quickly as possible.

Rationalisation:

I used the provisional term ‘zDiscourse’ to articulate the interest I had in some of the images that emerged from Tween. This term attempted to grasp what appear to me to be serendipitous narrative events that seemed to emerge when certain image transitions occurred. These serendipitous events surface when:

1. the content from two frames is blended in a single frame (the transition) which is above a certain threshold of *narrativity*; that is, sufficient to encourage a narrative reading and;
2. the blended image (transition) encourages a narrative interpretation which is altogether independent of any narrative potential in the source frames.

This is shown in Figure A1.2.3 below where the blended image transition illustrates the possibility of a catastrophic event – something like an earthquake or massive landslide. There is no hint of this kind of event in either of the original source images. The resulting

transition therefore transcends the content of the sources frames to produce a narrative image that is eventful.



Figure A1.2.3 Example output from *Tween* 2008 showing a transition that infers a visual narrative which is unconnected with any content implied in the source imagery used to generate it.

A1.3 Pulse

Pulse is a video installation that was developed in collaboration with Blackrock Castle Observatory (BCO) Cork City, Ireland. Researchers at BCO make use of visual and radio telescopes to study celestial objects. They have a particular interest in studying distant celestial objects such as black holes. Their contribution to astronomy is in the area of photonics where they aim to produce clearer images of distant objects by screening noise from the environment between the telescope and the object of investigation. BCO collaborate with observatories around the world by sharing data retrieved from telescopes focussed on object of common interest. One such 'entity' is a black hole at the spatial coordinates 0716 714. The data for the study of that entity was used in this work.

A general understanding of the behaviour of energy in black holes is that pulses of radiation get ejected in waves which are pushed out from the centre of the black hole. These waves travel at different velocities when they meet, collide, or resonate with each other these events cause a greater than average pulse of radiation (doppler boost) to be emitted. When a quasar (blazar), is pointed directly at the earth these energy emissions are registered in the telescope data as fluctuating light values, or pulses. In the data sheets collected from the various international observatories these pulses are recorded in a discreet set of numbers. An example of a data sheet is displayed in Figure A1.3.1. The numeric values relate to the strength of the radiation emitted. These pulses can be understood as explosive events which occurred in the past and which reach earth some 3.299×10^9 light years later.

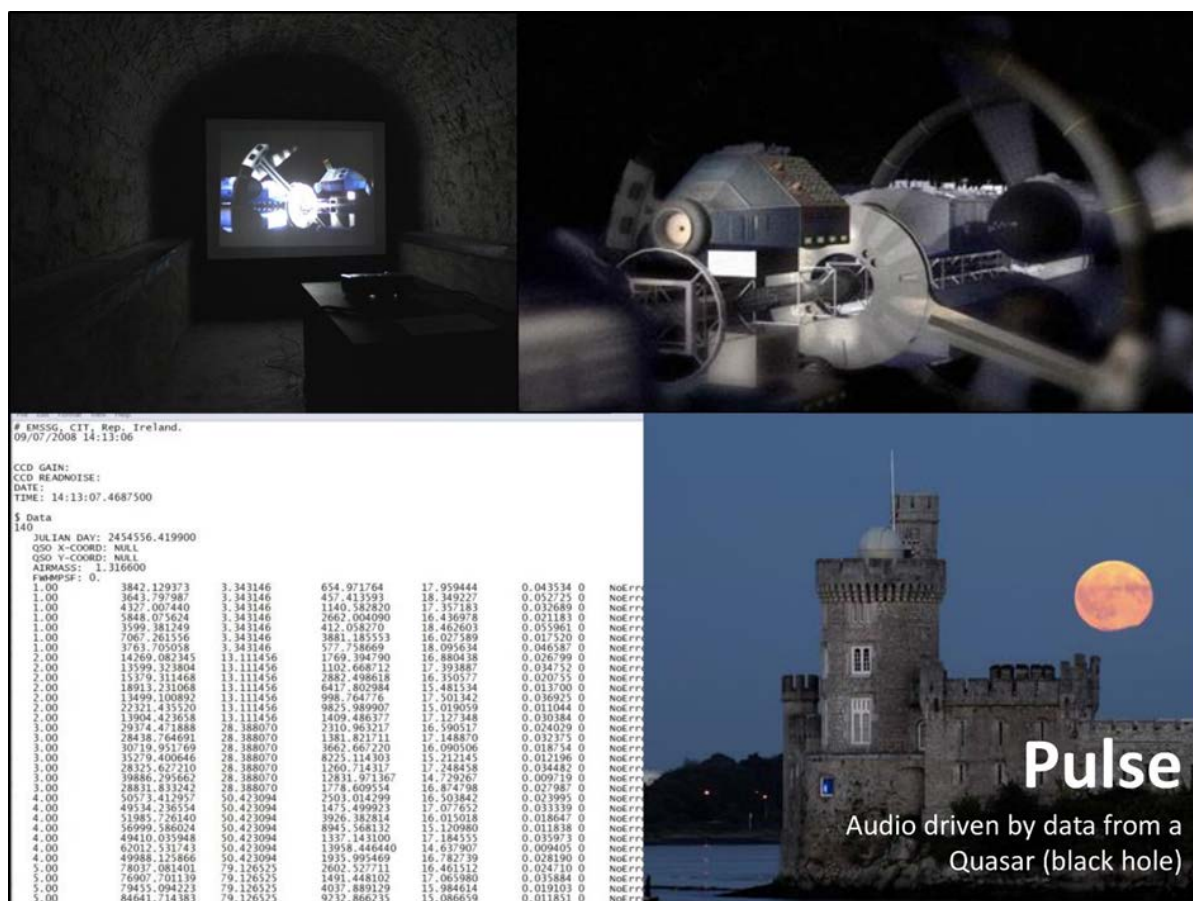


Figure A1.3.1 *Pulse* 2010 (Video Installation)

The development of the work 'Pulse' involved 3D animation, audio production, server side scripting (PHP), ActionScript3; and text data. The work is a made of two components. First is a video clip, 11:05:00 in duration, which is continuously looped. This is illustrated in the top right hand corner of the Figure A1.3.1 This visualises a space station modelled and animated in 3DS Max. A rendered version of this was taken through After Effects, where it was edited to introduce artefacts such as glitches and noise. The point-of-view (POV) has the appearance of being that of a drone which is circulating the space station possibly to document its status. The second element is an Actionsript3 file which gets data from the BCOs research text files, extracts relevant information, and converts these into variables that can be used to select and play

ambient sounds stored on a local hard drive. This AS3 file reads in, or imports, specific audio files depending on the intensity of the energy being emitted from the black hole.

The narrative by the work is promoted by an understanding that there is a causal connection between the energy emitted by from the black hole and the potential impact this might have on the space station. Each audio reflects a specific threshold of risk to the space station.

The work was installed at the Wandesford Quay Gallery in Cork City in October 2010 and the West Cork Arts Centre in April 2012.

A1.4 The Tailor



Figure A1.4.1 *The Tailor* 2009 (3000mm x 1000mm large format digital print)

This work is a digital composite which is developed by integrating elements collected using various techniques. Some elements such as the figure on the right the sewing machine, the router technologies in the centre, and the dress in the left panel were photographed independently of each other. Other elements such as the architecture, the worktable, and cables were drawn in a 3D visualisation package. Finally, the background landscape was produced using a graphic generative system which used genetic algorithms to automatically evolve landscapes. This visual landscape was produced by Dr. Paul Walsh a computer scientist in Cork Institute of Technology who had developed an interest in aesthetics and visual art and with whom I had collaborated with on several occasions. Potential future applications of the system were self-generating environments for games or other audio visual media.

This work was developed by integrating various elements together over time using narrative logic. The process from my perspective as a practitioner is one of discovering a story through the process of making a work. It is unlike other practices where a story

provides a plan for the process; for example, in filmmaking where a storyboard might be used to direct a team towards a particular outcome.

The work was output as a 3000mm x 1000mm large format digital print in three 1000mm² panels and exhibit in the foyer of the Tyndall National Institute in Cork City in October 2010.



Figure A1.4.2 A sample of elements used in the development of *The Tailor*. The element in the second row shows an architectural feature and character that were excluded from the final work

A1.5 Family Portrait



Figure A1.5.1 *Family Portrait* 2010-2011 (live portrait)

Family Portrait is a set of drawings produced by a piece of software developed first in Processing, and then in ActionScript 3 (AS3), which imports files from a directory, either locally or on a server, and then generates a composite image from them. The final image has the appearance of being painted. The process involves functions that randomly transfers pixels, or blocks of pixels, from the individual images into a file containing a digital canvas. Time intervals are set to enable the programme to borrow pixels from one image before moving on to the next.

The images above are static jpegs output from the programme. It is possible for a live version to run in an exhibition space. Depending on the time intervals set, the amount of pixels in the images, and the size of the pixel blocks being transferred it can take up to twenty minutes before the portrait first become identifiable. Once the canvas has been filled with pixels and a full portrait is visible, over time the various identities from different images in the directory drift in and out of perception. These changes happen slowly so it is only every few minutes a viewer might notice the identity in the portrait has shifted. By changing the length of the intervals this effect can be delayed or accelerated. While the programming is very straight forward using programming objects that are native to AS3, the work was interesting to me from the perspective that multiple identities seemingly emerging from what appears to be a single portrait.

On the one hand I found this work interesting in that it seemed to produce a portrait where the genetic features of individuals blended together into a single image. The final portrait seemed familiar to members of the family yet still was not an image of anyone in particular. From a theoretical perspective the work also resonated with some desk studies I had been conducting as part of my literature review. In particular work on social dramaturgy and ideas around the presentation of self in the work of Erving Goffman, described principally in his works 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' (1967), and 'Frame Analysis. An essay on the Organization of Experience' (1974).

The AS3 functions I wrote for this work I then began to explore in a context whereby a work could control where, or how a viewer, could be positioned by the work. I began working on controlling the display of images with sensors connected through the

computer via an Arduino board. I initially explored this through the use of sensors which could get information about a viewer's distance and position in front of a work.

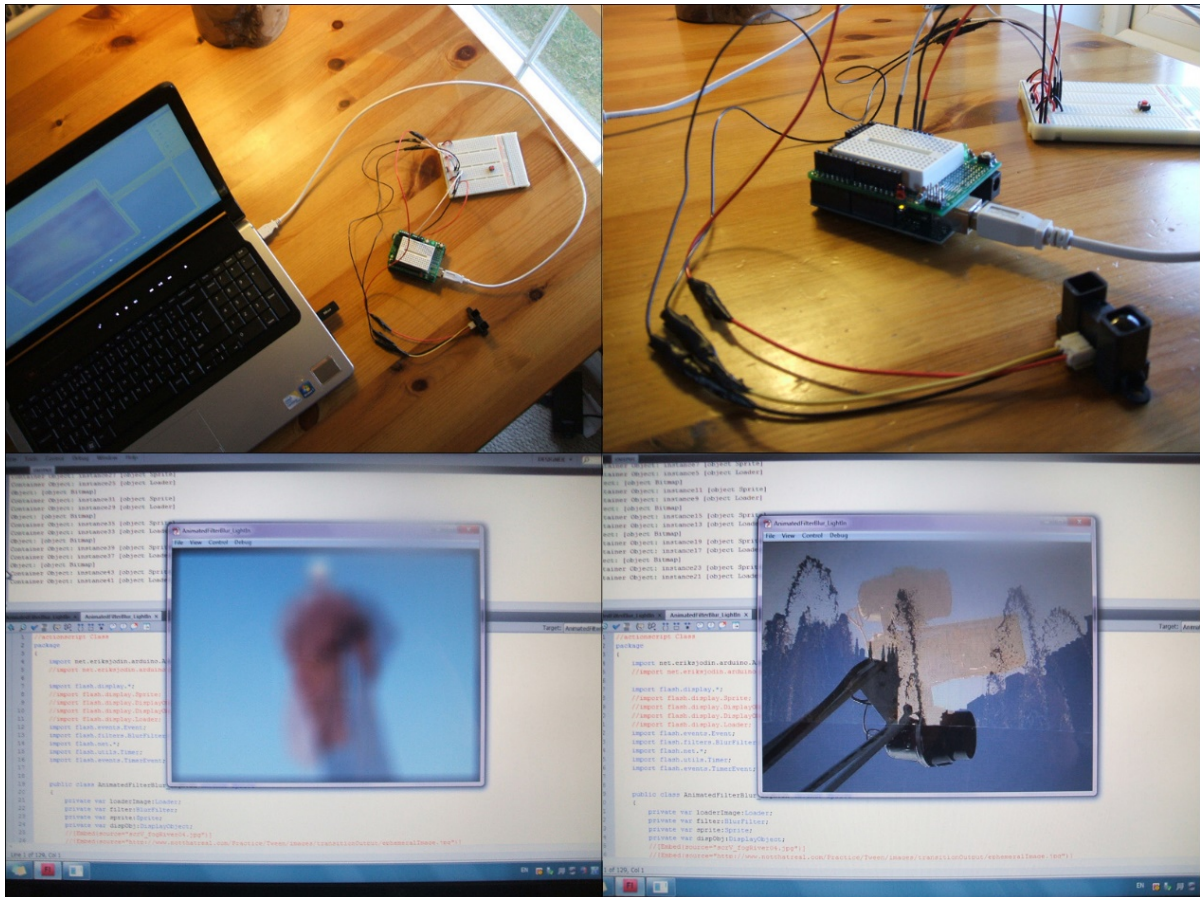


Figure A1.5.2 Development of sensor control of real-time image displays. This would be later used in 'Probe' (see section below Work Description 8.6)

See above in Figure A1.5.2 for an illustration of a setup using AS3 where the images are downloaded through a call to a PHP script imported and blurred using filters on bitmapped data object. In this case the image focus is controlled by the proximity of the viewer to the image. While it is wired with just one sensor the intention was to get a range of data about the viewer's position which in turn could be used to poke the viewer into a specific position. This was achieved later in the work entitled Probe where face tracking classes were used to get more precise information about the viewer. As a result of this experimentation I could see the work producing the kind of 'designs' and

‘fabrications’ that Goffman describes in Chapter 4 of *Frame Analysis* (1974, pp. 83-123). The work poses as having a function, for example an aesthetic function, but backstage it works to push the view a position where an image can be taken and used in another artwork, or another aspect of the same artwork. This technical work was later introduced in Probe 1.0. (see below).

A1.6 Probe

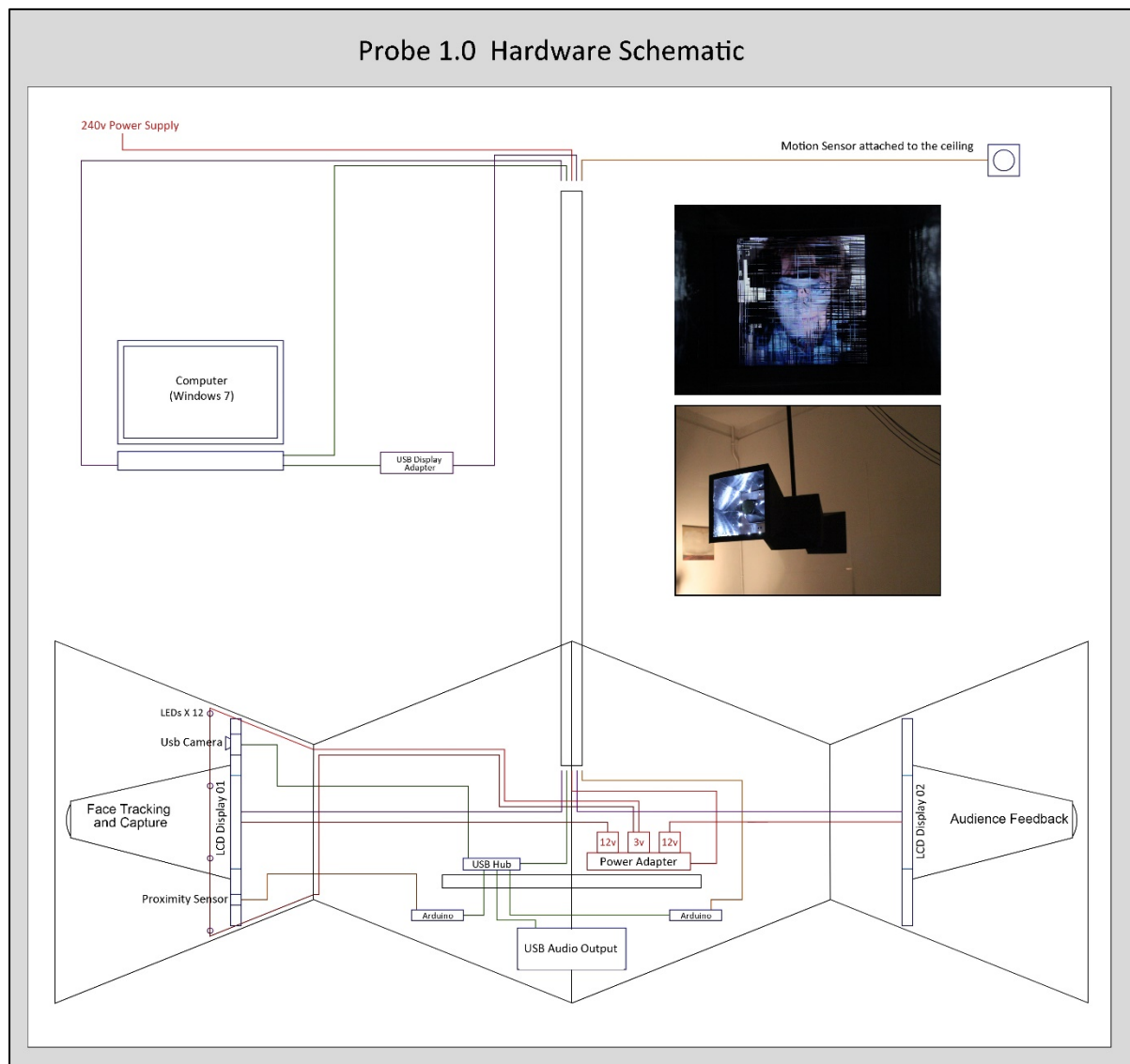


Figure A1.6.1 *Probe* schematic 2012 (Cullen and Green, 2012) (interactive sculpture)

Probe was a collaboration with Dublin based artist sculptor Mark Cullen. It was produced and exhibited in the West Cork Art Centre in April 2012 as part of the series of exhibitions entitled 'Difference Engine'. For this work I developed a software system for the sculpture which enabled people in the space to be monitored. The work facilitated what might be described as a form of passive interaction. Images of visitors in the gallery were captured by the sculpture and these images were integrated into the

content of the display. In some cases, it appeared obvious to participants that their image had been taken and used in the display while to others it seemed unclear. The work helped develop some thoughts around how narrative could be considered to be present in the thinking that supported the design of interactive or responsive works particularly in public spaces.

Technical Description:

It was an interactive sculpture measuring approx. 650mm x 650mm x 2000mm which was suspended from the ceiling at a height where people could approach the work and look directly into one of two lenses mounted on either end of the sculpture. The piece was suspended in the room in such a way that one of the lens pointed towards people entering the room. When the sensor mounted on the ceiling detected motion a strip of LEDs attached to the inside of the hood lit up to attract people to it. When they got closer it was apparent there was an animation playing behind the lens. This produced a situation whereby viewers were encouraged to look through the lens. Because the animated imagery behind the lens was distorted viewers move their heads into a position where they got the best view of it. Inside the same hood there was a proximity sensor and a USB camera which attempted to locate the viewers face in 3d space. The proximity sensor was connected back to a Windows 7 computer through an Arduino Uno. The USB camera was connected directly to the same computer which took a continuous stream of HD video into a bespoke programme written in ActionScript 3. To locate the viewers' faces in 3d space the programme continuously monitored both the proximity data and the video stream. The programme retrieved the proximity of the viewer's head from the inside of the hood and compared it to an 'ideal distance' value

that had been previously tested and stored as a ‘constant’ within the software. Simultaneously a face tracking library was used to monitor the position of a viewer’s face in the video frame and when it was within certain parameters a *flag*, or *Boolean*, was activated.

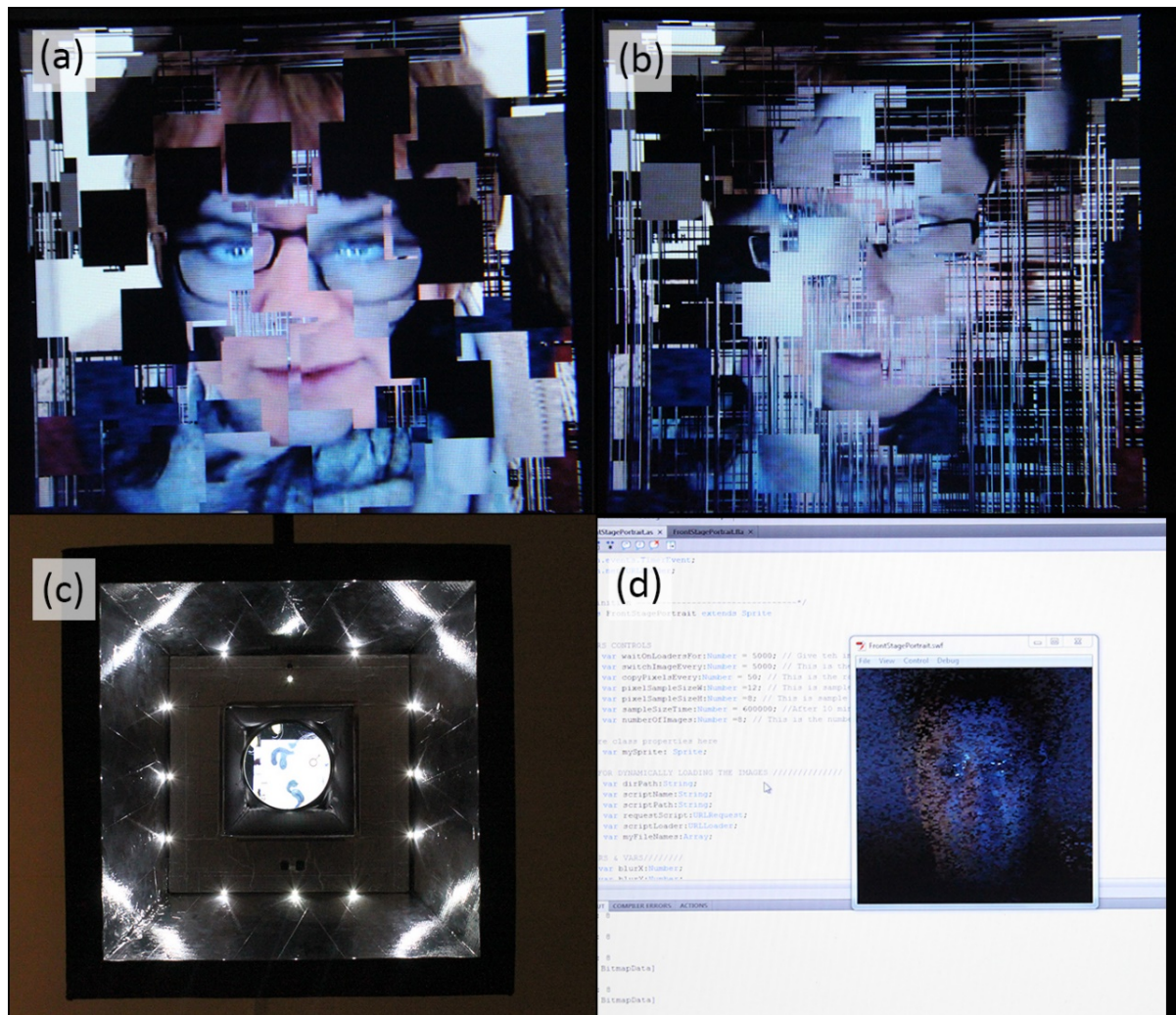


Figure A1.6.2 a) and (b) show examples images made up of the faces captured by the camera embedded in the hood (c) displayed behind the lens of. The image in frame (d) shows an example of earlier tests designed to establish an idealised distance of the viewer from the hood.

If the ‘ideal distance’ was registered by the software at the same time the detected face was suitably positioned within the video frame, the camera was triggered and a frame of video was capturing and stored in a directory in the computer. This process was silent so viewers were unaware at this point an image of them had been submitted to the

system. The fact that the animation playing behind the lens was deliberately ambiguous meant that people tended to hold their heads inside the hood for some time while attempting to make sense of it. This therefore improved the chances of the system capturing images of the viewers. This essentially summarises how the system managed the input of imagery.

When viewers in the space moved around to the other end of the work they were greeted with a similar interface; that is, a lens mounted inside a hood with an animation playing behind the lens. This animation however was a blend of the images that had been captured by the system. These images, illustrated in Figure 3.x (a) and (b), were constantly changing as new faces were being submitted to the system. The programme stored the images in an array which stacked the last four viewers. As new faces were submitted the fifth image was removed from the array. In this way people in the space were able to recognise themselves in the mashed images which included others in the space.

A1.7 Trails (See Appendix 1a also)

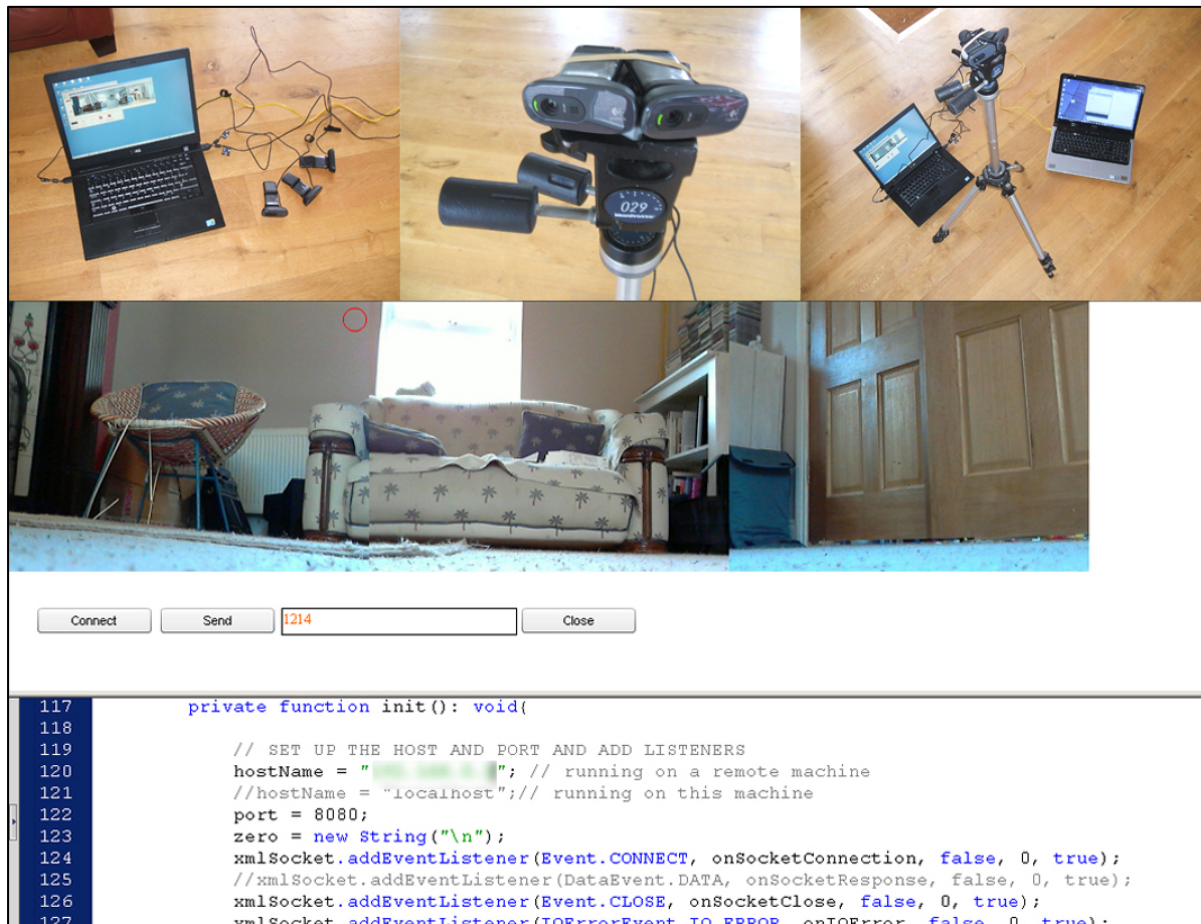


Figure A1.7.1 Camera motion tracking system developed in AS3

Trails (A1.7), was situated in the main corridor of the Berkeley IT Building in Cork Institute of Technology and consisted of three purpose build back-projection screens measuring approx. 5m long by 1m high. The work made use of inputs from 2 HD cameras which were stitched together into a single video feed that was aligned with the area of the corridor directly in front of the screens. When people passed in front of the screens the video feed from the cameras was monitored using a modified version of Justin Windle's MotionTracker Class for ActionScript™. The tracked input produced a XY coordinates which then passed to a particle system class I wrote AS3 which produced a visual trail that followed people along the section of the corridor. The work



Figure A1.7.2 Prototype version of *Trails* tested in public space

was designed in such a way that if people paused in front of the work the particles would grow in size to reveal an image behind. These were custom images which could also be scripted to run as a sequence like a slide show with an unfolding narrative. Some latency was experienced using only one machine to track the video input and control the output visuals in a large enough video image to cover the two screens. A later iteration of the work used three back projection screens with a resolution 1600px x 600px. The particle system ran without any significant latency as the revised design made use of two computers connected over a local network. While ActionScript™ was maintained in the role of tracking the motion from the cameras, the coordinates were then sent over the network to another computer which collected the data and used Processing to draw out the particle system on the three screens. Technically this prototype worked well. When one paused in front of the piece for a short time the particle system popped open into a

wider circle to reveal a photographic image people could explore. By walking slowly in front of the screens one could reveal elements in the image. If one moved too quickly the wider circle would collapse and the particle system would return to the behaviour of tracking your motion but hide the image from view.

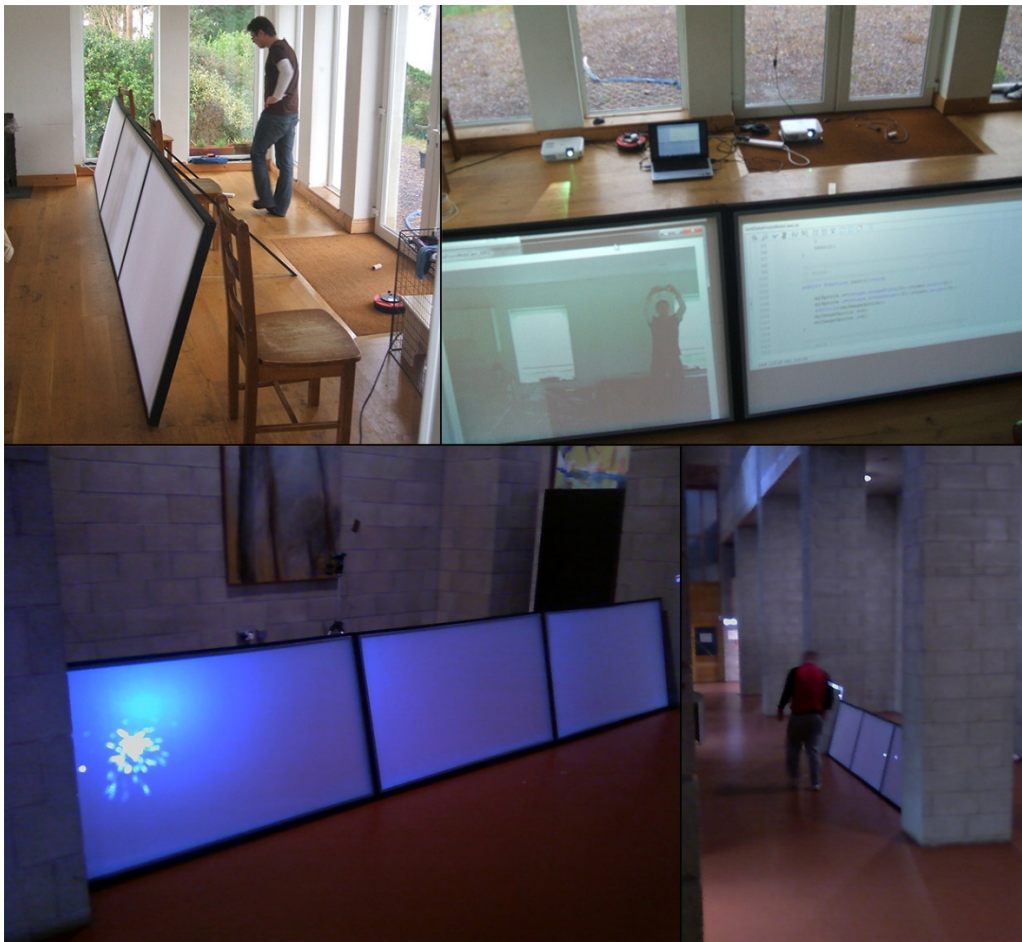


Figure A1.7.3 Revised version of *Trails* Tested in public space

The idea here was to use the practice of building a work to consider how people might engage in a different kind of reading of the photographic image. By slowing down the reading process one could argue that ‘time’, an additional narrative element, was being introduced into the reception of monophase images, or images organised in a sequence in time.

A1.8 Narrative Interventions (Cork City Gaol)

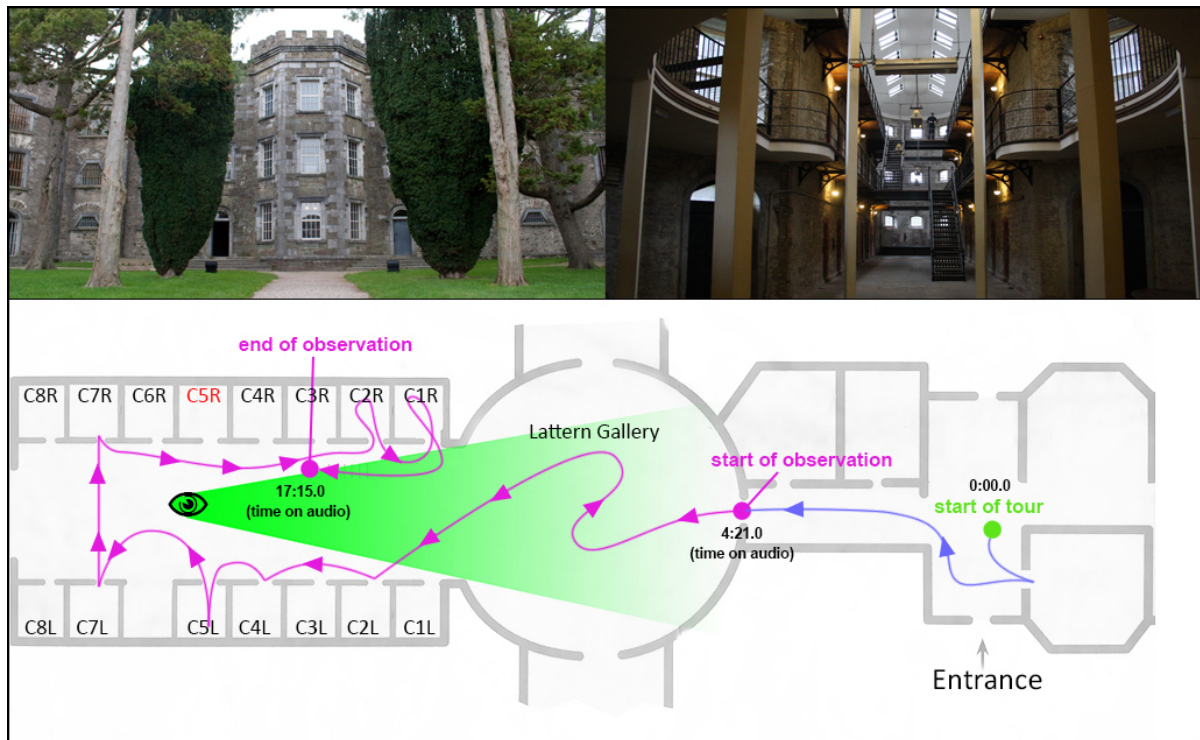


Figure A1.8.1 Study of narrative space was conducted in Cork City Gaol

The premise of this study was to explore potential relationships between the narrative content of the Cork City Gaol Heritage Centre (CCG) audio tour and the visitors' actions in the museum. The floor plan above is the west wing of the gaol and observations were constrained to area; this was the area of the visitor centre that was covered by the audio tour which focussed on narrative accounts of inmates incarcerated here at different times between 1824 and 1923.

The stories of inmates in the west wing of the gaol are made available to visitors through an audio tour and supporting printed material. In the section of the Gaol where observations were conducted the stories are largely biographic and wax figures in each of the cells provides a depiction of the inmate. The cells therefore can be understood as narrative nodes containing discreet accounts of individual prisoners. Six of the original

sixteen ground floor cells retell briefly the experiences of past inmates. The study set out to explore potential relationships between the narrative structure and content of the CCG audio tour and the visitors' actions in the museum.

It was envisaged at the outset that where the audio tour's narrative discourse was weak, or absent, there lay opportunities to introduce design interventions aimed at enriching the overall quality of visitor experience. From initial observations, it was noted that visitors initially engaged with the museum narratives but their interest appeared to tail-off well before the end of the audio tour.

While there was a strong interest in the stories of prisoners these accounts were not explicitly linked in any overall progressive plot structure which meant that visitors were free to wander and explore the architecture. It was possible to speculate about various factors that contribute to visitors wandering off the path prescribed by the audio tour, such as bottlenecks in accessing the cells at busy points in the day, or the composition of visitor groups (family groups, school tours, etc.), this open-ended engagement with the building was generally seen as a positive aspect of the gaol visit. While these self-contained narratives maintained visitor interests it was observed that after some time different visitors became distracted from the path prescribed by the audio tour. There were obvious exceptions where family groups included young children who distracted parents using the audio headphones and therefore from the narrative route prescribed by the audio.

By focussing on visitors who chose to use the audio to guide their visit, it was noted there was a clear division of attention to information among those taking the audio tour.

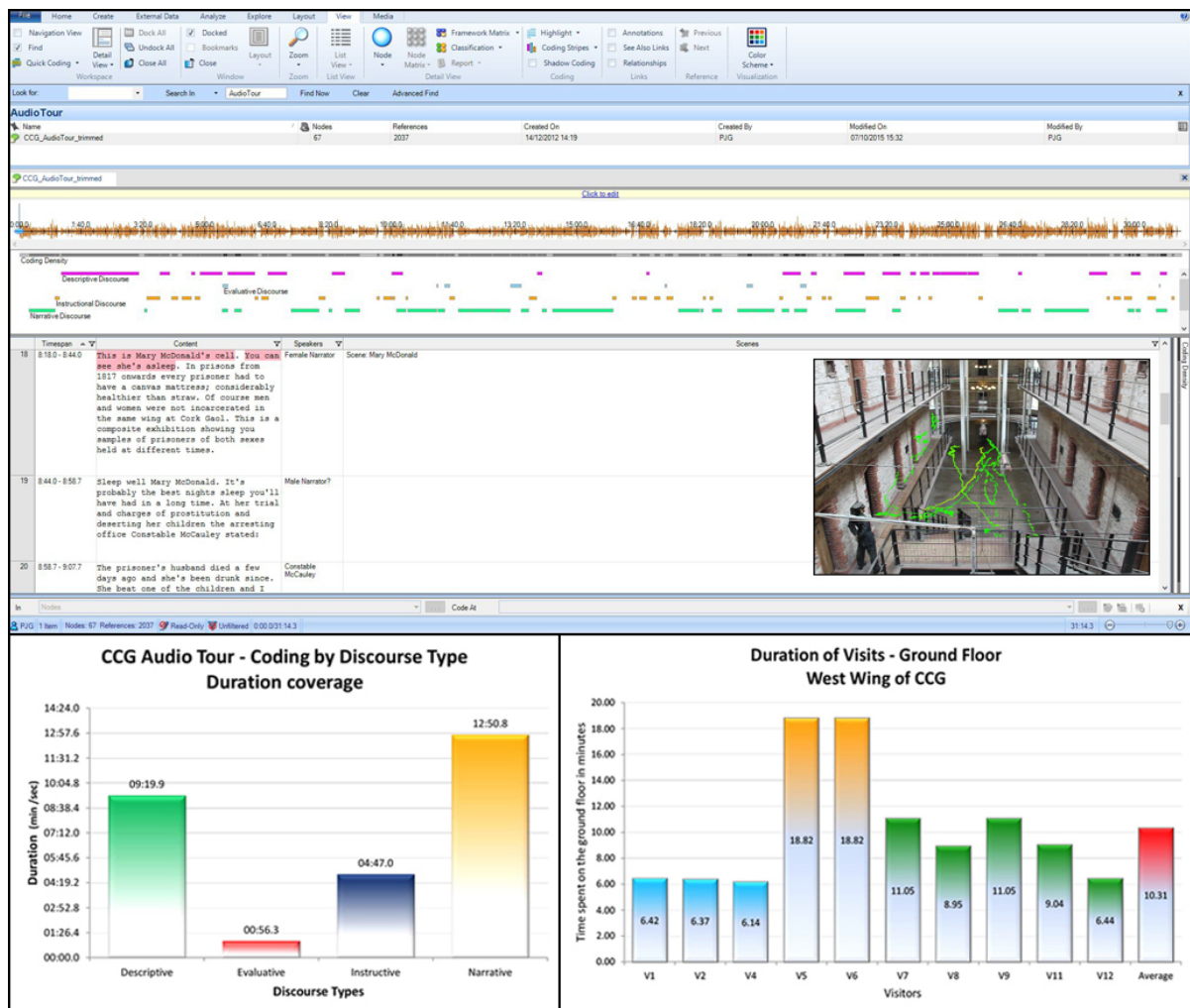


Figure A1.8.2 Movement of visitors was observed against a narrative audio tour to explore the relationship between the audio tour and the movement of visitors in the space how the narrative influenced. The audio tour was analysed and coded in accordance to various classes of discourse (e.g. description, instruction, and narrative) see Appendix 3.1 for a transcript of the audio.

On the one hand while visitors were engaged in the narrative accounts of past inmates they did not easily break from the content until the stories were complete. However, when moving between nodes (accounts in the cells) visitors were open to distraction; either talking or taking in the surrounding architecture of the gaol. A thematic analytic approach was adopted to uncover patterns in the audio discourse and the visitors' activity in the space. The data gathering methods included informal discussions with the museum staff, taking and reflecting on the experience of the audio tour; shadowing visitors taking the audio tour and observing their actions through naturalistic and

participative methods. A transcription and qualitative analysis of the audio material separated the audio discourse into four types: descriptive, instructive, evaluative and narrative.

Intervention:

An intervention was developed for cell C5R (see location in Figure 8.8.1) where, from initial observations, it was noted that visitors, at this point in time, had begun to become distracted from the information on the audio tour. Each of the stories represented in the previous cells up to this point followed a pattern in terms of content and style of narration. The analysis of the audio also showed that there was a gap in narrative content here so it seemed a useful point on the tour to explore making an intervention in that pattern. Some of the cell doors had spy holes with sliding hatches and it was decided to introduce alternative content there that may be 'discovered'.

Prototype Description:

The initial prototype consisted of a 5.5inch LCD in a wooden frame mounted on the back of the cell door behind the spy hole opening in cell C5R (Figure 1), originally used by warders to observe prisoners. The LCD had a VGA connection so it can operate as a second desktop for the laptop computer running inside the cell. In this version of the prototype a video file running in a continuous one-minute loop constituted the only visual output. It was non-interactive and represented the eye of a young inmate looking out through the opening (see Figure 4). In addition, there was an Arduino board attached to the back of the door which routed values from a light sensor to a PC located inside the cell. Running on the PC was Pure Data (PD) with a patch that polled the values from the photocell embedded in the door in a such a way that determined whether the spy

hole hatch was opened (active) or closed (on standby). The light readings were tied to instructions in the PD patch to begin recording audio from the microphone into memory. When the hatch was closed an audio file was written to disk which provided an accurate timestamp for the interaction. The patch was programmed to deactivate after a set amount of time (e.g. 30 seconds) if the hatch was left open by a visitor interacting with it. The patch was programmed to incrementally record audio in small chunks so that there was no significant recording lag when a visitor interacted with the latch. The visual content was minimal and lacked any explicit narrative content but the recording feature could capture the number of times the door was interacted with and also the verbal utterances displayed by visitors on discovering the video.

General Description of Observation:

There was some concern when the prototype was installed that no visitors would become aware of it as there was nothing comparatively distinct about the cell door. Therefore, in advance it was anticipated there would be a low probability for visitors to interact with the spy hole as it was imagined the audio tour would usher visitors past the door to the next point on the audio narrative which was at C1R and C2R. It was thought that it would be necessary to develop some content that would serve to attract visitors however in the 35-minute direct observation of the area around the prototype five visitors from two groups interacted with the slide door. The first to interact was a girl who appeared to enter the space and after pausing at the Lantern Gallery area, as was the case for most people using the audio tour since this was a point of information, she then moved directly down the right hand side of the hall ignoring the path indicated by the tour. She appears to look briefly through some of the cell door spy holes before

approaching the prototype cell and sliding the hatch open for approximately one second. After appearing to glance at the video she then moved back to the opposite side and joined the visitor she had entered with and seemed to re-join the audio tour without any report to her partner about the prototype. This seemed unusual since the hatch was opened and closed without any pause to consider the video content.

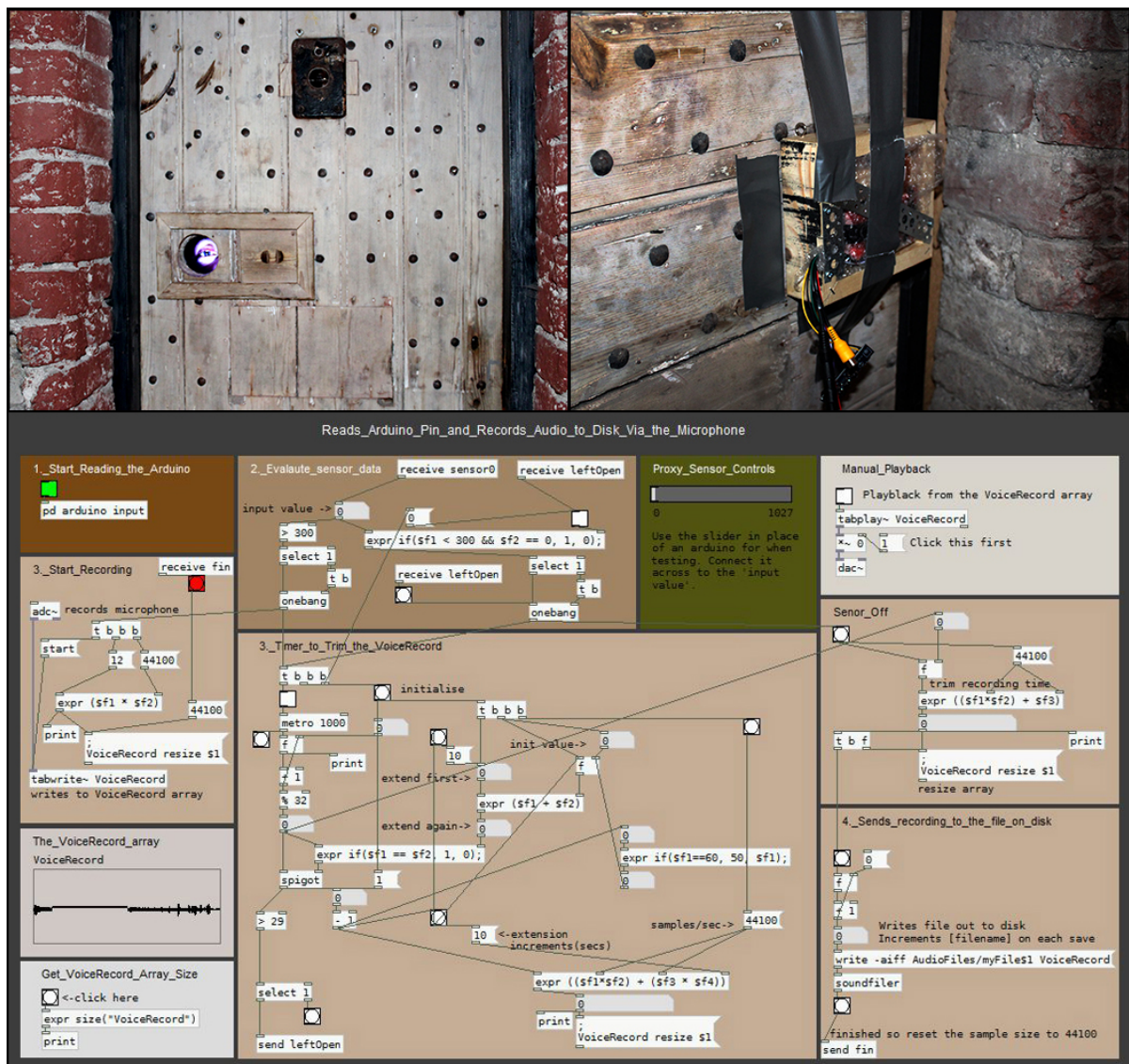


Figure A1.8.3 A prototype narrative work was embedded in the space behind one of the cell door spyholes.

Within one minute of this event another visitor coming from the opposite direction exited C7R ahead of the other three members of his group. When the others left the cell they moved directly towards C1R and C2R appearing to follow the instructional content

on the audio device. The male visitor walked more slowly, as if disinterested, and paused at the C5R door where he then discovered the video. In response he called vocally to his group and gestured for them to return. One group member returned immediately and looked in at the video. He repeated this alert until all of his group had returned and looked at the video. After briefly surveying the video they all then moved towards the next point on the audio tour; on their way however they checked the spy holes on all the other cells.

On inspecting the recorded data from the disk afterwards it showed that the hatch had been activated six times by this group and some utterances were captured which contained both linguistic and non-linguistic oral information. While the set up successfully collected and time stamped verbal and expressive feedback from visitors directly at the interface, more extensive formal testing supported by additional methods of data collection would be required to establish how such data may contribute to building a picture of visitor experience in the Gaol.

Appendix 2

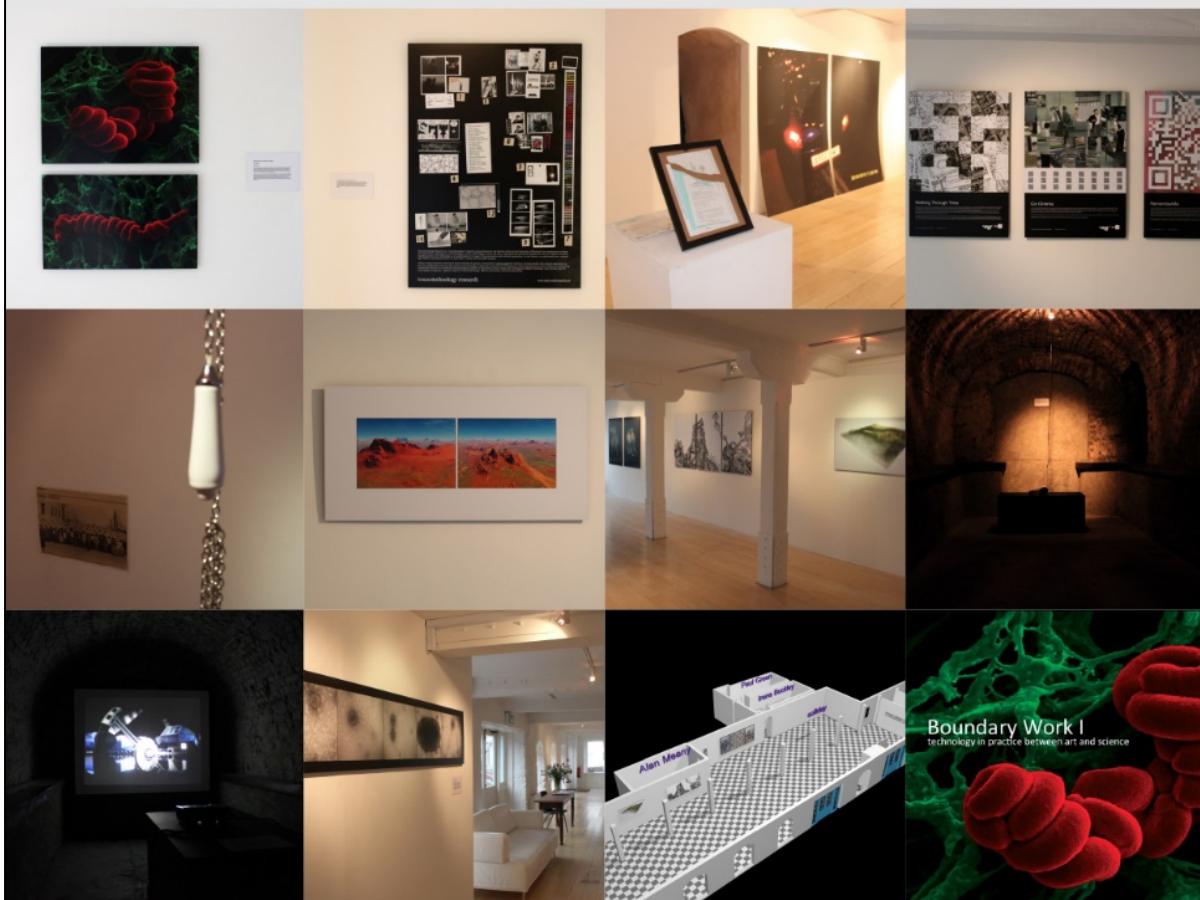
Boundary Work Exhibitions 2010 -2012

&

Hosting of Irish Human Computer Interaction Conference 2011



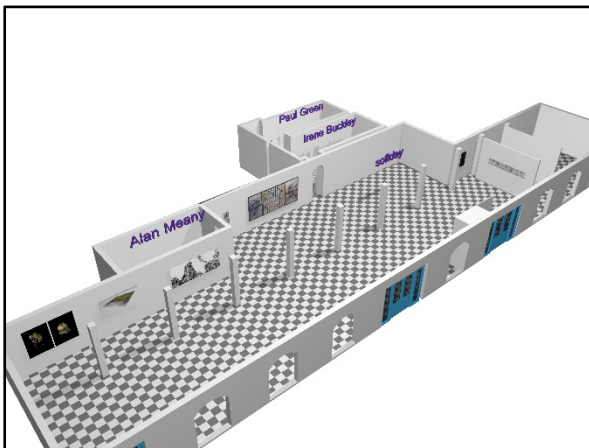
Boundary Work
Wandsworth Quay Gallery November 2010 & October 2012



A2.1Wandesford Quay Gallery



Figure A 2.1.1 and A 2.1.2 Wandesford Quay Gallery Cork with virtual interior below.



The exhibition was hosted at the Wandesford Quay Gallery in Cork in November 2010. Because of the diversity of those participating and collaborating in the show. It was curated online with the assistance of a scale 3D model of the

gallery. As information about proposed works were submitted they were arranged in the virtual gallery and shared with the artists so all could see how the show was developing. As new works were submitted, or dimensions of works changed the exhibition was rearranged to fit the space. Updates were post to participating artists and organisations to ensure that everyone was in agreement with how and where their work

was displayed within the exhibition. When the final works were arranged in the virtual gallery to the satisfaction of everyone, works to be printed was sent on work in a variety of digital formats and were printed locally. While the exhibition was driven by me it was in fact a collaborative effort from all involved. Some works in this exhibition would go on to be later used as data for analysis as part of the PhD Programme.

The Boundary Work exhibitions were designed to facilitate a survey of work that operates in the space between art and science. This theme brought into play a dialogue between people from a range of diverse disciplines. Some of these were clearly located within art and design while others came from traditional and emerging field in science and engineering. The imagery exhibited in the exhibitions was negotiated with practitioners from different parts of the world and a virtual model of gallery was constructed as a communication tool to facilitate a shared understanding of how the exhibition was being curated.

From the perspective of the research, Boundary Work provided the opportunity to negotiate in a wide range of narrative explanations of the works as part of the curatorial practice. The exhibitions also provided interesting data to be used later as part of a thematic analysis of narrative across a range of disciplines.

A2.2 Boundary Work I - 2010

The introduction to the first exhibition is quoted here:

‘New Media Art can stimulate a mental image of a genre that breeds on techno-aesthetics alone. However, such a view short-changes the diversity of opportunities opened up in recent years through moves such as artists-in-

labs programmes and the development of programming tools for artists. More significantly there is a growing public consciousness that evolving technologies hold significant implications for future human cultures. Such developments have assisted in the emergence of wet or living art, the growth of networked and intelligent artefacts, and a vision of the world enabled through new instrumentation designed for the investigation of macro- or nano- scale material environments. In addition to new genres, supported through access to new technologies, existing established practices in the arts have critiqued or been inspired by the technology and market driven actions in science.

So while science and art are often identified as opposing fields of knowledge technology can be seen as a common driving force in both. This gallery event attempts to draw activities in both of the worlds of art and science together in a dialogue where technology is the common agent.

The exhibition therefore is a representation of work that treads the boundary between art & design and science and an invitation to participate was extended to artists, designers, and researchers in practices particularly relating to science and/or technology.'

Boundary Work 1: <http://notthatreal.com/BoundaryWorkI/>

A2.3 Participants: Groups & Institutions

Biological Sciences, Cork Institute of Technology <http://www.cit.ie/biologicalsciences>

The Department of Biological Sciences is an education provider in the areas of Life Sciences, primarily: Biomedical, Herbal and Microbial Sciences. Research in the Department is complementary to these areas with a focus on the clinical applications of molecules discovered from natural sources, having a mission statement: Discover, Design and Deliver.

Blackrock Castle Observatory, Cork <http://www.bco.ie/>

Blackrock Castle Observatory is a 16th century Castle located 4km from the heart of Cork city on the banks of the river Lee. It was set up with the aim of affecting a positive change in attitudes toward science, engineering and technology in Ireland and be recognised and respected as a centre of excellence in scientific research, education and outreach.

Crawford College of Art and Design <http://www.cit.ie/citcrawfordcollegeofartanddesign>

The Crawford College of Art & Design is a constituent college of Cork Institute of Technology, providing education in the arts for over 200 years. The Department of Fine Art and the Department of Art & Design Education are based at the Sharman Crawford Street campus, offering programmes in Fine Art, Ceramics and Art Education. The Department of Media Communications and the Department of Art Therapy are based at CIT Bishopstown.

Fields, Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland <http://fields.eca.ac.uk/>

Fields is a collaborative space where ideas and projects involving places, memories and people are shared. Fields is made up of researchers within ESALA (Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture) who examine subjects such as digital technologies, urban planning and social architecture.

i-DAT, University of Plymouth <http://www.i-dat.org/>

i-DAT is a research group directed by Prof. Mike Phillips and located in the Centre for Art, Media and Design Research, Faculty of Art at the University of Plymouth. It acts as a catalyst for creative research and innovation across the fields of Art, Science and

Technology, facilitating regional, national and international collaborations and cultural projects.

Interaction Design Centre, University of Limerick <http://www.idc.ul.ie/>

The Interaction Design Centre is an interdisciplinary research group in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at the University of Limerick (Ireland), focused on the design, use and evaluation of information and communications technologies. The focus is on human-centred design, with a strong interest in collaborative settings, exploring the design and use of novel interactive and communicative artefacts to support human activities. Work in the IDC covers a wide spectrum, from the design and evaluation of new media installations and interfaces to field studies of technology in use in different settings.

Transtechnology, University of Plymouth <http://www.trans-techresearch.net/>

Transtechnology Research is a transdisciplinary research group situated in the Faculty of Arts. Its constituency is drawn from historians, philosophers, anthropologists, artists and designers and is led from a historical and theoretical perspective with the objective of understanding science and technology as a manifestation of a range of human desires and cultural imperatives. Its key focus is to understand how a technology acquires meaning and how it is used after it enters into the public domain. The group is led by Prof. Dr. Michael Punt (Leonardo Reviews)

Tyndall National Institute, Cork <http://www.tyndall.ie>

The Tyndall National Institute (Tyndall) was created in 2004 at the initiative of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and University College Cork (UCC)

to bring together complementary activities in photonics, electronics and networking research at the National Microelectronics Research Centre (NMRC), several UCC academic departments and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). The objective is to create a research institute, which would become a focal point of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Ireland, to support industry and academia nationally and to increase the number of qualified graduate students for the 'knowledge economy'.

A2.4 Participants: People

Dr. Irene Buckley <http://www.irenebuckley.com>

Irene Buckley is a composer living and working in Cork. She is currently completing a PhD in Composition at University College Cork. She holds an MA in Music Technology from Queens University Belfast. Her work is characterised by the dynamic interplay between the possibilities of classical acoustic and contemporary digital instrumentation and sounds. Her pieces have ranged from scores for full orchestra to tape pieces to interdisciplinary collaboration, and have been performed in locations that scale from the grandiose to the peculiar: Carnegie Hall (NY), Tycho Brahe Planetarium (Copenhagen), Brooklyn First Presbyterian Church (NY), Galeria Kronika (Poland), Muziekgebouw (Amsterdam).

Pete Carrs <http://www.i-dat.org/pete-carrs/>

Pete manages the University of Plymouth Immersive Vision Theatre (Full Dome) and has created content and methodologies for immersive visualisations, for a variety of disciplines, within the immersive vision theatre. His research interests include: Photography and Fisheyes, Video (Camera Arrays, Fisheye capture, CODECS, Streaming over SIP/H.323), Surround Sound and Sound Design, Programming Linguistics, RealTime 3D, Ai and Neural Nets, Ubiquitous Computing, Computer Vision, Embodied Cognition, Dome Projection Systems, CAVES/VR.

Dr. Aidan Coffey & Dr. Jim O'Mahony <http://www.cit.ie/biologicalsciences>

Research in Biological Sciences at CIT being carried out by Jim O'Mahony and Aidan Coffey seeks to adjust the virus' reproductive desire to focus on destructive pathogenic bacteria such as MRSA. Continuously developing visualisation technologies increase

the potential for researchers to identify, locate and describe organic mechanisms and their processes. With this increased empirical precision, scientists can intuit more accurately about the behavioural patterns of these micro and nano-scale hunters.

Hamer Dodds <http://www.hamerdodds.com>

Hamer Dodds is an artist and scientist. He received a Masters Degree in Biochemistry from London University and is a Master of Fine Art (Edinburgh College of Art). He has exhibited work in the UK, mainland Europe and the USA and illustrated scientific books. Hamer's work focuses on the space where art and science overlap. He has a particular interest the complexity of biological systems. He pays attention to the tension that exists between the mundane and ultra-mundane aspects of science and art. The influences of both Tufte and Ernst Haeckel can be seen in his work. Recent works are concerned with the relationships between phylogeny and biodiversity. Hamer is working with scientists from The Universities of St Andrews and Edinburgh on aspects of biodiversity using the working title of Green to Red.

Mikael Fernström & Sean Taylor (aka Softday) <http://www.softday.ie>

Since 1999 visual artist Sean Taylor and computer software designer Mikael Fernström (aka SOFTDAY) have collaborated on a number of high profile science/art projects. Both artists are interested in exploring 'the cracks' between various media such as expanded theatre, sound art, sculpture, music, dance and the application of new technologies. Softday probes the intersection of art and science as part of a larger creative and public discourse on climate change that may motivate people emotionally in a way that scientific analysis can often be hard-pressed to do. Softday are not

advocating solutions in their work, but instead strive for something far more subtle- to make us reflect and redefine what it is to be human in the 21st century.

Musaab Garghouthi <http://www.i-dat.org/musaab-garghouthi/>

Musaab has worked across a range of disciplines developing bespoke simulations to support research and teaching. His work in the IVT (Immersion Vision Theater) has lead to a range of collaborations with industry, producing animations and models for installations and shows (such as Intech and the Houses of Parliament). One of the latest live projects has been for Devon Marine Wildlife trust which consists of composited bespoke data (bathymetry, xml, population density maps) into various 3d video productions which led to the introduction of a 60sq mile exclusion zone in Lyme Bay - the first of its kind on this scale in the UK.

Alan Giltinan <http://www.bco.ie/>

Alan Giltinan is a senior researcher at Blackrock Castle Observatory. Upon completing a Masters degree with the Environmental Monitoring and Space Science Group, CIT, Alan has gone on to specialise in instrument physics and applying this in the area of Astrophysics. Currently located at BCOlabs in Blackrock Castle Observatory, the group excel in experimental astrophysics in the areas of Super Massive Black Holes (Quasars), Near Earth Asteroids and Extra Solar Planets.

David Kavanagh

David Kavanagh is a Cork based artist and teacher. He is a graduate of Crawford College of Art and Design and in 2006 completed an MA in which he researched the potential of visual art to promote science in the education system. His work continues

to play with representations of the universe as revealed to us by scientific research. He uses a range of media from traditional drawing to digital printmaking. His work can be found in a range of national and international collections and he recently exhibited in the RHA annual exhibition.

David McConville <http://www.elumenati.com>

David McConville is an artist based in Asheville, North Carolina, USA. He is a graduate of the prestigious Planetary Collegium and is currently Director, of the Noospheric Research Division of The Elumenati who specialise in immersive projection design.

Alan Meaney <http://www.alanmeany.net/ambientknowledge.html>

Alan is a native of Cork and graduated from the Media Communication Department in CIT only this year. As part of his final year project he focussed on exploring ways technology can support people in becoming conscious of negative habitual behaviours. He recently exhibited his work in Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria and has been invited to further showcase his work on the international stage most recently in Paris.

Professor Mike Phillips <http://www.i-dat.org/mike-phillips/>

Mike Phillips is Professor of Interdisciplinary Arts and director of i-DAT, a component of the Centre for Media, Art & Design Research at the University of Plymouth. Phillips is a Principal Supervisor for the Planetary Collegium, a member/supervisor of the Transtechnology Research Group. His R&D orbits digital architectures and transmedia publishing, and is manifest in two key research projects: Arch-OS [www.arch-os.com] (now reincarnated in Perth WA in the form of the i-500 [www.i-500.org]), an 'Operating System' for contemporary architecture ('software for buildings') and the

LiquidPress [www.liquidpress.net] which explores the evolution and mutation of publishing and broadcasting technologies.

Dr. Roy D. Sleator <http://www.cit.ie/biologicalsciences>

Sleator and his team at the Department of Biological Sciences at CIT, are focused on identifying how disease causing bacteria, such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, adapt and respond to changes in their external environment such as in foods, where salting has traditionally been used as a food preservation technique. By learning how the bacteria respond to such stresses it is possible to design novel and improved control strategies – dramatically reducing the incidences of infection.

Dr. Chris Speed http://fields.eca.ac.uk/?page_id=65

Chris Speed is a research active designer working within the field of Digital Architecture, Human Geography and Social Computing developing new forms of spatial practice that transform our experience of the built environment. He is currently a Reader in Digital Architecture at the Edinburgh College of Art and has a background as an artist, freelance multimedia designer and art editor at a large publishing company in London. His research focus is best characterised by his doctorate entitled ‘A Social Dimension to Digital Architectural Practice’ which presented a critical opportunity for Digital Architecture to develop new forms of practice that embrace social computing principles within a cultural geographical model of space.

Dr. Paul Thomas <http://www.visibleSPACE.com>

Paul Thomas, is Associate Professor at the College of Fine Arts in the University of New South Wales, Australia. He is the founding Director of the Biennale of Electronic

Arts Perth. Paul completed a PhD researching a reconfiguration of spatial attitudes and is a practicing electronic artist whose research can be seen on his website 'Visiblespace'.

Dr. John Vines <http://www.johnvines.eu/>

John Vines is a design academic and practitioner whose research investigates how changes to human beings in later life may impact upon how people interact with certain types of technology. He began his AHRC funded doctoral candidacy in October 2007 at Transtechnology Research focusing on developing alternatives to the contemporary strategies used by designers when developing novel digital media products for older people to participate with.

Dr. Paul Walsh <http://www.pwalsh.net/>

Paul Walsh is a computer scientist, currently lecturing in the CIT's Department of Computing, who has extensive experience in designing and implementing innovative computing systems. He has published numerous peer reviewed international computer science articles and led and organised scientific conferences and committees. He has recently specialised in the development of machine learning software that allows non-specialist users to create designs and artefacts, ranging from game objects to landscape paintings. He has in recent years become drawn to aesthetics in art and is currently exploring processes that automate the evolution of pictorial content based on evolutionary computation.

Dr. Martyn Woodward http://www.trans-techresearch.net/?page_id=25

Martyn Woodward is a visual communications designer who has been researching the limits/ limitations of understandings of visual communication since 2004. He began his Ph.D in October 2008 at the University of Plymouth with a research focus on developing new strategies for Visual Communication which are analogous with the emerging research into the Embodied human condition. He is also the research Assistant on HERA project based within Transtechnology research. Previous to this Martyn studied at the University of Wales in Newport, Obtaining a Bachelor, Degree in Graphic Design / Visual Communication in 2005 and his Master, in 2007.

A2.5 Works and Information

Biological Sciences, Cork Institute of Technology: Dr. Jim O'Mahony, Dr. Aidan Coffey



Figure A2.5.1 Lactobacillus Brevis Phage by Jim O'Mahony and Aidan Coffey

The Lactobacillus brevis phage is a virus that does not have essential self-replicating functions often associated with living entities. In order to reproduce itself it searches for a bacterium it recognises and attaches to the wall of the cell enabling it to inject its DNA. The bacterium plays host to the virus using its reproductive machinery to clone itself. After possibly a hundred copies are generated the viruses reassemble and burrow back out through the cell wall in search of further bacteria. The hijacked host is killed off in this process.

Research in Biological Sciences at CIT being carried out by Jim O'Mahony and Aidan Coffey seeks to adjust the virus' reproductive desire to focus on destructive pathogenic bacteria such as MRSA. Continuously developing visualisation technologies increase

the potential for researchers to identify, locate and describe organic mechanisms and their processes. With this increased empirical precision, scientists can intuit more accurately about the behavioural patterns of these micro and nano-scale hunters.

Roy D. Sleator

These scanning electron micrographs (with false colour added by Mr Pat Casey, APC) represent *Listeria monocytogenes*; a disease causing bacterial cell. When the normally rod shaped cells are exposed to high concentrations of salt they become elongated and curl up in defensive positions to form protective coils. This is the first report of such a phenomenon and has been traced to a specific mutation in the bacterial genome.



Figure A2.5.2 Listeria by Roy D. Sleator and Pat Casey

Sleator and his team at the Department of Biological Sciences at CIT, are focused on identifying how disease causing bacteria, such as *Listeria monocytogenes*, adapt and

respond to changes in their external environment such as in foods, where salting has traditionally been used as a food preservation technique. By learning how the bacteria respond to such stresses it is possible to design novel and improved control strategies – dramatically reducing the incidences of infection.



**Figure A2.5.3 Drosophila by i-DAT University of Plymouth, TERG University of Plymouth, Theoretical Biology
University of Vienna: Musaab Garghouthi, Pete Carrs, Peter Smithers, Dr. Brian Metscher**

This volumetric rendering of a *Drosophila*, or common fruit fly, was produced by Musaab Garghouthi (Institute of Digital Art & Technology, University of Plymouth) in association with Peter Smithers (Terrestrial Ecology Research Group, University of Plymouth) and Dr. Brian Metscher (Theoretical Biology Dept., University of Vienna). The volumetric rendering is composed of 600 slices at 6 μm digitized through a scanning technique developed at the University of Vienna. Converted to a format readable by 3D visualisation software such as 3DS Max this visualisation was output as a 3D video projection to be experienced in a dome environment. Because of the procedural structure of the 3D model it is possible for a viewer to interact with the image exploring the inner bodily cavities of the fly. The software used to produce and

visualise the volumetric model of the fly was: Drishti and 3d Studio Max and the interaction was enable through OpenSceneGraph.

Hamer Dodds



Figure A2.5.4 Unity Principle by Hamer Dodds

The work is grounded in the simple practice of observation, a skill important, if not fundamental, to art and science alike. All the drawings in this work (at present there are 11) are contiguous. This is important as in a real way there are no discrete ecosystems. Although controversial, this idea is very much in line with the current debate about the usefulness of the idea of species in describing biota.

The viewer is asked to consider the many relationships that exist between the organisms presented in the drawings exhibited here, be they aesthetic, scientific or philosophical. All the types of form drawn have been directly observed in the field in Belize, working alongside scientists from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. The organisms have

been identified to the level of Genus wherever possible. The scale and the particular relationships between various organisms have quite often been altered to convey the methodologies used in taxonomy.

Fields, Edinburgh College of Art

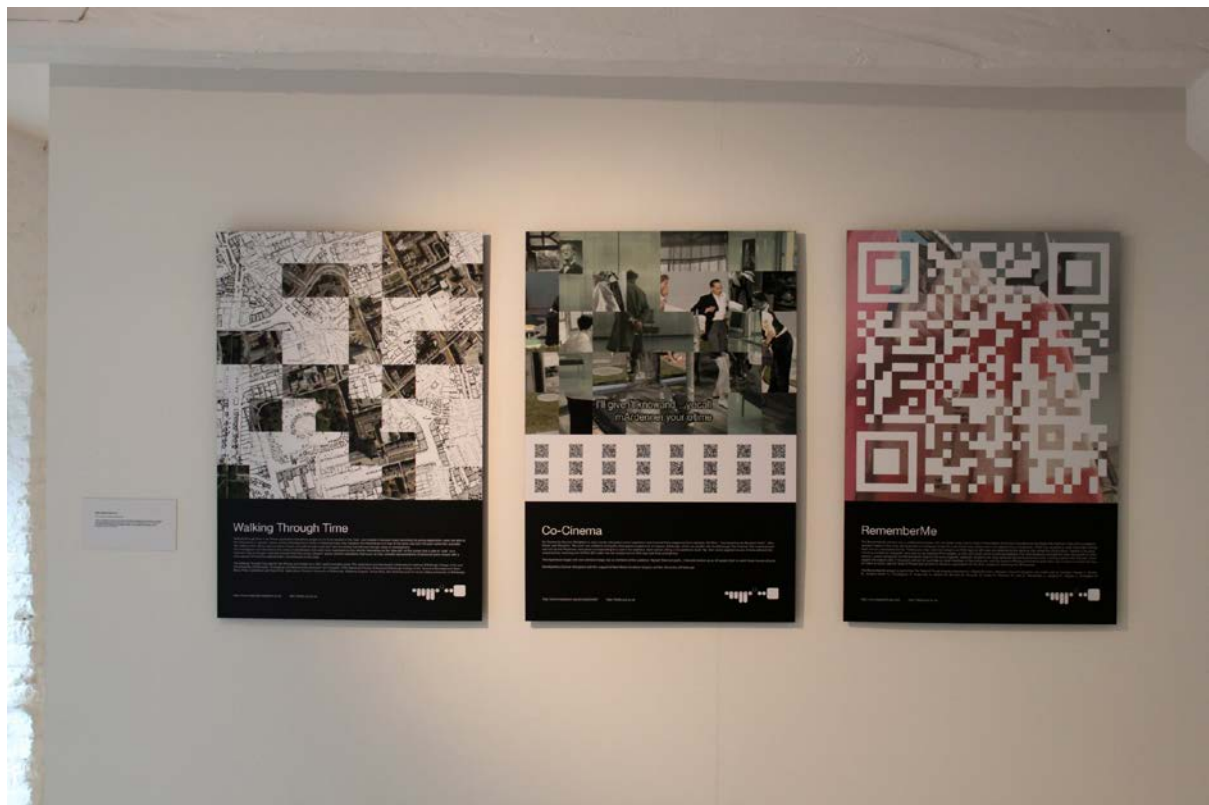


Figure A2.5.5 CoCinema, ToTEM, Remember Me by Fields, Edinburgh College of Art

Fields is a collaborative space where ideas and projects involving places, memories and people are shared. Fields is made up of researchers within ESALA (Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture) who examine subjects such as digital technologies, urban planning and social architecture.

Irene Buckley



Figure A2.5.6 Rotation of the Earth by Dr. Irene Buckley

This 5:30 minute piece was composed by Irene during her three-month residency at the Centre Culturel Irlandais, the piece is inspired by a visit to Foucault's Pendulum, housed in the nearby Pantheon. The famous pendulum was conceived as an experimental proof of planetary rotation.



Figure A2.5.7 Ambient Knowledge by Alan Meany

This project aimed to provide domestic energy information in an aesthetically pleasing, easily accessible, convenient, glancable manner. The project developed an energy information display (EID) that aimed to reduce the burdens and cognitive load on users in an effort to induce changes in behaviour that result in a sustained reduction of energy use in the home. The lamp fades from green through blue to red depending on how much electricity the house is consuming in real-time.

Dr. Paul Thomas



Figure A2.5.8 Nanoessence by Dr. Paul Thomas

The data from an Atomic Force Microscope of a living and dead HaCat cell is used to create a hybrid layered environment. The layered nano topographies from the AFM skin cell scans create a large data projection display representing the essence of life and creates the basis for the hybrid metaphorical landscape. The work was made in collaboration with Kevin Raxworthy.



Figure A2.5.9 Eden I, Eden II, Eden III, ... by Dr. Paul Walsh

These work(s) have been created by software that generates virtual landscapes by a process of evolutionary computation (EC), which is a biologically inspired subfield of machine learning that has been applied to a wide range of design problems. Evolutionary computation uses an iterative computational search guided by optimisation criteria over a problem domain to provide an optimal or near optimal solution. For these works the optimisation criteria has been provided by the human designer's aesthetic preferences. This approach allows high complex artefacts, such as these landscape paintings, to be created by a designer who has no formal training in art.



Figure A2.5.10 (Left) Sensual Communication by Martyn Woodward; (Right) Ageing Futures by John Vines. (The central panel is a poster describing the research at the Transtechology Research Group in University of Plymouth).

Sensual Communication by Martyn Woodward

This research discusses the ways in which Visual Communication practices within Western cultures are fundamentally restricted by a limited vision of the capabilities of the embodied sensory experience. Through the early adoption of digital Audio Visual methods of communication, the Western consciousness has shifted to be Audio Visually dominant and thus privileges Audio and Visual information. It argues that Westerners may not be utilising the fullest potential of their embodied sensual experience and therefore a significant disengagement with the whole of the sensory range within Western experience has been enforced.

Ageing Futures by John Vines

This research is situated within the context of a gradually ageing population within western Europe. Within this ageing population there is an apparent desire from older adults to engage with novel forms of technology, yet there appears to be a profound inability to do this. It is suggested by various scientific communities, such as cognitive psychology, that this inability is due to the changes that occur to the cognition of most human beings as they age. This investigation builds upon recent attempts in design to develop novel technological interactions that are better suited to the cognition of older people. The research critically investigates the assumptions that underlie the scientific knowledge of ageing cognition as they are applied by designers of novel technologies.

Interaction Design Centre, University of Limerick



Figure A2.5.11 The Interaction Design Centre poster description of research

The Interaction Design Centre is an interdisciplinary research group in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at the University of Limerick (Ireland), focused on the design, use and evaluation of information and communications technologies. The focus is on human-centred design, with a strong interest in collaborative settings, exploring the design and use of novel interactive and communicative artefacts to support human activities. Work in the IDC covers a wide spectrum, from the design and evaluation of new media installations and interfaces to field studies of technology in use in different settings.

David Kavanagh



Figure A2.5.12 Cosmic Cupboard by David Kavanagh

Cupboard Cosmos is a catalogue of our solar system all encased in a single box. Various planetary bodies make up the centre panels with the Sun spread over the four doors. Far from being a reliable record of the solar neighbourhood it is a collection of errors, anachronisms and fantasies mixed with current scientific orthodoxy. For instance, the planet Vulcan is included, a planet which was widely thought to exist in the nineteenth century, but which was done away with by the paradigm shift caused by Einstein's theory of relativity. Cupboard Cosmos is also an attempt to challenge the familiar textbook image of the solar system with the planets neatly arranged around the Sun in neat lines or concentric circles.

Tyndall National Institute, Cork

The Tyndall National Institute (Tyndall) was created in 2004 at the initiative of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and University College Cork (UCC) to bring together complementary activities in photonics, electronics and networking research at the National Microelectronics Research Centre (NMRC), several UCC academic departments and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). The objective is to create a research institute, which would become a focal point of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Ireland, to support industry and academia nationally and to increase the number of qualified graduate students for the 'knowledge economy'.



Figure A2.5.13 Images from the Advanced Materials & Surfaces Group, Tyndall National Institute. Images show Polymer bonds across a crack in a silica nanoparticle film, and Title: Zinc oxide crystallites formed around a dust particle in a zinc oxide film.

Polymer bonds across a crack in a silica nanoparticle film submitted by John McGrath

The figure shows a Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) image of silica (SiO_2) particles assembled into a photonic crystal. The particles have diameters $300\text{nm} \pm 5\%$. Photonic crystals are periodic structures that exhibit a so-called optical band gap, that forbids the propagation of a certain frequency range of light. It is important to reduce defects in such structures. The figure shows that cracks (defects) in the film can be partly repaired by adding a polymer filler. Applications for this materials are in sensors, telecommunications, computers (very-very far away) but also photonic paper.

Zinc oxide crystallites formed around a dust particle in a zinc oxide film submitted by Shane O'Brien

This image is of zinc oxide ceramic, which is being researched in Tyndall National Institute – UCC. It has a range of applications in areas such as fabrication of transparent displays and gas sensing. The material is of particular interest in transparent displays as it is a non-toxic alternative to tin based materials which are currently used. This picture was taken at a magnification of X 3060. For use of zinc oxide in displays or sensors, a uniform grain structure is required in which grains are oriented perpendicularly to a glass sheet on which they are formed. For this to occur, the oxide must be prepared under carefully controlled conditions. This is usually the case. However here, a dust particle entered the furnace causing crystallites to form on the surface and propagate in a random manner. This image appeals to me as it is a reminder that in ceramic technology the aim is to reduce and ultimately remove naturally occurring non-uniformities. In ceramic processing, reproducible structures are desired. But in nature,

processes such as crystallization are random (think of snowflakes, no two are the same).

All it takes is one grain of dust to transform a featureless ceramic coating to this.

CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory & University of Plymouth: Alan Giltinan, Paul Green, and Cian Roche



A2.5.14 Pulse by Paul Green

Pulse is a video installation that was developed in collaboration with Blackrock Castle Observatory (BCO) Cork City, Ireland. Researchers at BCO make use of visual and radio telescopes to study celestial objects. They have a particular interest in studying distant celestial objects such as black holes. Their contribution to astronomy is in the area of photonics where they aim to produce clearer images of distant objects by screening noise from the environment between the telescope and the object of investigation. BCO collaborate with observatories around the world by sharing data

retrieved from telescopes focussed on object of common interest. One such 'entity' is a black hole at the spatial coordinates 0716 714. The data for the study of that entity was used in this work.

Pulse makes use of data collected from the entity at the coordinates above to determine the audio track played to the looped animation of a space station. The energy being emitted from the black hole, as described in the data, is the basis for the construction of narrative events which are implied by changes in the mood of the piece. These alterations in mood are induced by the automatic switching of audio tracks in accordance with the certain levels or thresholds of energy in the data.

The work was directed, visualised and programmed by Paul Green. BCO Labs provided the data with explanations of its significance. Cian Roche Designed the audio which was called on for the narrative events.

Mikael Fernström & Sean Taylor (aka Softday)



Figure A2.5.15 Nobody leaves 'til the Daphnia Sing by Mikael Fernström & Sean Taylor (aka Softday)

In 2009 we collaborated with Enterprise Ireland's Aquatic Toxicity Laboratory (ATL) in Shannon, Co. Clare. Over a number of months, we visited the laboratory in Shannon and learned about some of their methods for measuring and monitoring the toxicity of water samples. One of the main methods used is to use living organisms, *Daphnia magna*. These are small, planktonic crustaceans, between 0.2 and 5 mm in size. *Daphnia* are members of the order Cladocera, and are one of several small aquatic crustaceans commonly called water fleas because of their salutatory swimming style. They live in various aquatic environments ranging from freshwater lakes to ponds, streams and rivers. These tiny crustaceans are very sensitive to their environment and are also used in laboratory research for analysis of water and soil toxicity. Because *Daphnia* may be used to test the effects of toxins on an ecosystem, this makes *Daphnia* an indicator

species, particularly useful because of its short lifespan (typically 1 to 3 months) and parthenogenetically reproductive capabilities (they become mature in about 2 weeks and can then produce offspring every ten days).

To test a sample for toxicity, varying amounts of the sample is mixed with amounts of pure water with a small *Daphnia* population. The population is then observed for some time to check the mortality rate of the *Daphnia*. The toxicity is defined as Lethal Concentration for 50% mortality (LC50).

In addition to the testing, the ATL has to breed and maintain a healthy population of *Daphnia* under pure conditions. The breeding and feeding has to be monitored to assure that there always is sufficient supply of *Daphnia* available.

We decided to use a simple web camera to monitor movement of *Daphnia magna* in a beaker and to sonify the movement of the living *Daphnia* as an ambient auditory display. The field of view of the web camera would be mapped to musical notes with the vertical mapped to pitch and the horizontal to note duration. We decided to use four containers with living *Daphnia*. A web camera connected to an Apple iMac computer running Pure Data with the Graphics Environment for Multimedia (PD/GEM) monitored each container.

We designed and implemented a PD-patch for capturing the video and using blob detection to track the movement of *Daphnia*. The movement was then mapped pitch along the vertical axis and note duration along the horizontal axis. For timbre, we chose a synthetic human singing voice and the four containers mapped to the ranges of bass, tenor, alto and soprano. As each container typically had ten living *Daphnia*, this resulted

in a complex choral polyphony. Our metaphor behind this choice was ‘the budgie in the coal mine’, i.e. alluding to that when the *Daphnia* die the singing stops and when humans notice this, our own end may be nigh unless we take immediate action.

David McConville

These are still images from the Visualizing Worldviews project, which is integrating cosmographic maps within interactive 3D visualizations for presentation within immersive vision theatres. This work utilizes the material artefacts of cosmic representations to illuminate the inherently situated perspectives of human cognition. The four images represented here, in clockwise direction starting at the top left, are entitled: Oikoumene, Copernikant, Ptolemagic and Birdman.



Figure A2.5.16 Cosmographic Hermeneutics. Top Left: Birdman; Top Right: Copernikant; Bottom Left: Oikoumene; Bottom Right: Ptolemagic.

Top Left: Birdman

Cave of Lascaux painting and the NASA Blue Marble Next Generation. The earliest cosmographical representations yet discovered are believed to be paintings with the Cave of Lascaux, proposed to represent the summer triangle constellation approximately 16,500 years ago. It is proposed that the hybrid bird creature represents the shamanic ability to leave one's body to travel amongst the stars.

Top Right: Copernikant

Planisphaerium Copernicanum from Cellarius' Harmonia Macrocosmica and the NASA Blue Marble Next Generation. The visual representation of the heliocentric Copernican cosmography is widely credited as a primary instigator of the European scientific revolution. After nearly 500 years, the model of a static sun surrounded by planar planetary orbits is still widely taught, even though it is scientifically understood that the sun is traveling at close to 1 million kilometres per hour around the Milky Way. The orbits of the planets are not elliptical, but helical, dimensionally extruded as the planets orbit a moving star.

Bottom Left: Oikoumene

The Tibetan Cosmic Mandala and the NASA Digital Universe Atlas.

Within Tibetan Buddhist system of Abhidharma, the world system is believed to float in “air” (space) and is only one of billions, termed the trichilocosm. Like the Earth in NASA's Digital Universe Atlas, each system has at its centre a central axis, which can be taken as the ground from which the embodiment of the perceiving consciousness

manifests and is sustained. Unlike most scientific cosmographies, the Tibetan mandala is meant to exist simultaneously alongside seemingly conflicting systems.

Bottom Right: Ptolemagic

Scenographia Systematis Mvundani Ptolemaici from Cellarius' Harmonia Macrocosmica and the NASA Blue Marble Next Generation. Ptolemy's geocentric cosmography reflects the perspective shared by most pre-scientific cultures of the Earth enclosed by rotating spheres. The apparent curvature of the sky is a result of the spherical perspective of human vision.

A2.6 Boundary Work II

The introduction to Boundary Work II was give as follows

Boundary Work I is the second in a series of exhibitions designed to facilitate a survey of work that operates across interdisciplinary spaces. These boundaries are often dividing lines between the arts and serious sciences.

Boundary Work I involved a selection of works from a variety of different practices which included fine art, music, microbiology, photonics, astronomy, nanotechnology, and various applications of new media in design. Fifteen different groups and individuals who operated independently or were affiliated with institutions internationally were invited to exhibit work as part of the exhibition. This in effect brought 'anonymous' scientific imaging, used in scientific data collection and analysis, into the same creative space as creative work specifically designed to engage or provoke thinking. The issues that the exhibition raised for consideration included concepts related to authorship and ownership, creativity in work practice, and questions around the notion of an art object's 'inherent' and 'exclusive' aesthetic properties. The presumption that we do not find these qualities in artefacts produced through the practice of science and engineering as also as it turned out a central consideration.

Boundary Work II continues to be concerned with questioning the placing of people and ideas within specific disciplines or categories. In this exhibition Mocksim was invited to exhibit a selection of his work at the CIT Wandesford Quay Gallery. While the presentation of pieces in Boundary Work I conformed to more traditional notions of presentational aesthetics Mocksim invites appreciation in relation to process, performance, and above all humour. The exhibition overall represents a link between art, science, and engineering which is wired together in two distinct ways. The first relates to the artist's own research practice and the thematic interests that permeate his work which incorporates concepts from artificial intelligence and cybernetics. Secondly, Mocksim's professional path began in the field chemical and process engineering, after which he specialised in complex mathematical simulation. Somehow he arrived in the present as a full-time practicing artist and researcher. He has exhibited widely and is currently undertaking a PhD at the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts at the University of Sussex where his supervisory team is derived from a blend of disciplines in science, engineering and creative practice.

So while society continues to be organised around discreet disciplines and roles we generally find that this is not the truth in what we practice. Third level educational institutions, for instance, are segregated into Science, Engineering, Business, Humanities, and Arts yet graduates and postgraduates rarely find it necessary, or even possible, to remain entirely inside a single discipline. So while often in presenting ourselves formally we select a single dominant role, typically from our work practice, there are many disciplines at play within us. It could be argued there is a natural tendency towards inter-disciplinarity that developed economies over the course of the twentieth century in particular have disposed of. However, we now continue to witness a rhetorical push in general language towards the integration of knowledge from different disciplines.

Boundary Work II presents Mocksim as a hybrid of roles and as an artist who integrates concepts from science and engineering into his practice. As before Boundary Work promotes conversation across these disciplinary lines.

The Artist

Micheál O'Connell (alias Mocksim) graduated from Cork RTC (now Cork Institute of Technology) with a BSc in Chemical Engineering in 1985, specialising then in mathematical modelling and simulation. He pursued a career in computer simulation, initially building training simulators for oil and gas companies, then working with clients in other industries before being headhunted into Accenture's global team of specialists. Simultaneously he'd engaged in political activism and artistic practices (the latter a consistent feature, originally nurtured during oil painting and pottery classes at Cork's Crawford) in response to his growing dissatisfaction with the corporate world. Later he took his life-long interest in art seriously by pursuing academic qualifications, setting up studio, completing (with distinction) an MA in Fine Art at University of Brighton, UK. For a period, he delivered stand-up comedy routines at venues around Britain integrating both performance and digital media approaches into his creative practice.



Figure A2.6.1 Image from the 'Contra-Invention' series exhibited at 'Les Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie d'Arles' and included in the Boundary Work II exhibition.

Since 2004 Micheál O'Connell/Mocksim has exhibited widely and in 2011 Martin Parr invited him to show his series 'Contra-Invention' at the prestigious 'Les Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie d'Arles' and he was subsequently nominated for the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize 2012.



Figure A2.6.2 Work by MockSim at Boundary Work II

A2.7 Irish Human Computer Interaction Conference 2011 (IHCI)

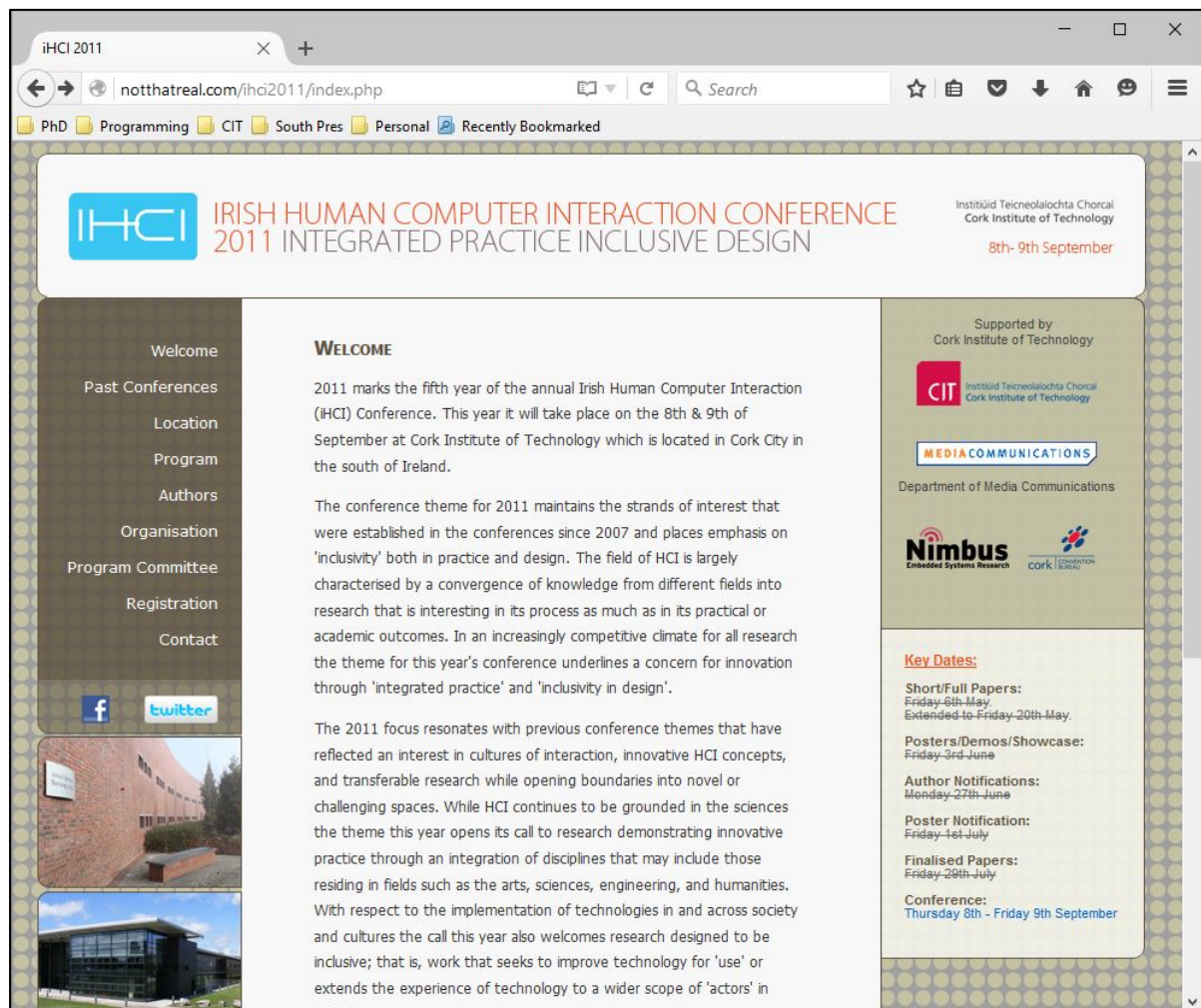


Figure A2.7.1 IHCI 2011 Screenshot of website

The IHCI 2011 Conference was awarded to CIT by the steering committee of SIGCHI Ireland. In 2011 I took on the role of conference organiser and chaired the meeting of the conference on 8th and 9th September. The conference was hosted in the main CIT campus and in the Nimbus Research Centre in Bishopstown, Cork. The keynote speaker was Paul Adams. Paul is recognized as a leading thinker on designing social interactions, and spent four years leading user research for Google's social web projects including Gmail, Mobile and YouTube. At the time of the conference he was a Product

Manager at Facebook, where he worked on the design and development of new advertising products and strategies.

Having presented at the IHCI conference in the 2010 I was interested to see if there was an opportunity to integrate creative disciplines such as those within art and design into the HCI programme in Ireland. While there were some very interesting approaches to design, and narrative, by those engaged with the Irish chapter such as Luigina Ciolfi, Liam Bannon, and John McCarthy the programme continued to be dominated by computer science and engineering research in fields that from 2011 had limited interest within the context of my own PhD. Although I have experience organising events and exhibitions previously, the experience of hosting this conference with delegates from Ireland, Europe and North America was hugely beneficial.

A copy of the iHCI 2011 website can be inspected at: <http://notthatreal.com/ihci2011/>

Appendix 3a -Transcript of CCG Audio Tour

Description: Full Audio Tour

	Timespan	Content	Speakers	Scenes
1	0:00.0 - 0:15.0	Are you inside yet, in the prisoner reception area? When you are you'll see the desk of the jail's reception warder, and just left as you come in stands a female prisoner escorted by a female warder.	Female Narrator	Scene: Orientation
2	0:15.2 - 0:21.3	The prisoner is Mary Sullivan and it isn't the first time she's been inside.	Female Narrator	Scene: Mary Sullivan
3	0:21.3 - 0:50.5	It follows her eight conviction for petty thieving since 1850. This time she's been sentenced to penal servitude for seven years. Mary is a seamstress by trade and most of her thefts have been of clothing and remnants of calico cloth to work on. She has already been deloused according to standard regulations prior to being presented before the Governor. She wears her own clothes now but will be issued prison clothing later.	Male Narrator	Scene: Mary Sullivan
4	0:50.5 - 1:04.0	Mary is waiting to see the Governor who interviews every prisoner upon admittance. You can jump the queue ahead of Mary and turn immediately right into the holy of holy the Governor's office.	Female Narrator	Scene: Mary Sullivan
5	1:07.0 - 3:12.0	A portrait of Queen Victoria glowers down upon this fairly spartan and completely circular office, as if we needed reminding of whose rule we're under. At least there's a cosy fire in the grate. On either side of the fireplace are two	Male Narrator	Scene: Governor's Office

		<p>narrow niches. These were for storing the sticks used for torches for walking through the prison passageways at night. In those days there was no indoor artificial light here. Next to the niches on either side are two panel doors opening into cupboards in which the governor keeps personal effects as well as the prison documents and files. The ward keys are kept locked in the governor's desk. The governor himself sits engrossed over his papers. This particular governor is John Barry Murphy whose term of governor was from 1856 til 1873. There's something special about governor Murphy. He was the first roman catholic to be appointed to the office which carries with it an annual salary of 250 pounds; quite a good one in 1865, plus accommodation, food, and fuel. At this time the British authorities are pursuing a policy in Ireland of appointing Irish Catholics to important, if not quite the top, positions in the state. Governor Murphy has under him a staff of 23 including: (change of narration) a senior matron, (who governs) the women's side of the gaol, an assistant matron, a weaver, appotecre, (nurse tender), 9 turn keys, 2 chaplains, and an assortment of teachers. He is renound for his kindness and consideration towards prisoners, who include not only common criminals but political detainees. Indeed as a catholic prison governor during troubled times he must tread carefully the fine line between answering to British authority and causing needless offence to his often very politically active countrymen.</p>		
6	3:14.0 - 3:20.0	Now you will tread in the footsteps of hundreds of prisoners before you about to begin their sentences.	Male Narrator:	Scene: Treading Footsteps To Western Wing

7	3:20.8 - 3:22.4	Move along there.	Female Warder Character	Scene: Treading Footsteps To Western Wing
8	3:22.4 - 3:24.7	Move Along	Male Warder Character	Scene: Treading Footsteps To Western Wing
9	3:24.7 - 4:14.6	Turn around and go out of the office now. Turn right (at) the governor's door and go through the reception area. Are you through yet? Then, turn left by the stairs into a passage and walk down it. Incidentally as soon as you are in the passage you will find public toilets immediately to your right if you require them. At this time Cork Gaol houses both men and women but in separate wings. In 1878 it will become an all women prison which it will remain until the 1920s. It will be closed down in 1923. Your heading for the West Wing. Continue along until you reach a narrow open doorway directly ahead of you. Pause just on the other side of it and switch this tape on again there.	Female Narrator	Scene: To Western Wing
10	4:21.0 - 5:27.0	Turn briefly to examine the narrow little passage you came through into the Western Wing. You gain an idea of the thickness of Cork Gaol walls. Turning around again you now view the length of the Western Wing. This was completed in the late 1870s about fifty or so years after the original gaol was constructed. Moving four or five paces forward from the doorway you find yourself within a great circular drum gallery. Leading off sharp to left and right are two of the original wings of cells, and from here you get a splendid perspective view of them; and one which would enable a warder standing here to keep his eye on both. They look different from the later and loftier Victorian wings directly ahead of you. Unlike the other two that wing is much like the	Female Narrator	Scene: Drum Gallery

		interior of prisons in use today. Down the older wing on your left you can see the windows looking out onto the governor's garden with a row of cell doors opposite.		
11	5:27.1 - 6:19.1	It must have been frustrating to know that there was greenery always just out of sight especially as you can hear the birds singing. Moving a few more paces forward you will be at the centre of the 'drum' and in position to look straight up into the 'lantern'. You can see what an abundance of light it provides. This gallery, which was a closed off circle prior to the building of the extension, was used for Sunday worship with prisoners lining the railings on the landing. Lines on the floor ahead of you indicate the original circular wall boundary. At the opposite end of the prison behind you is the other lantern topped gallery. That too served as church or chapel on Sundays. At one end the services were Roman Catholic chapel at the other protestant or Church of Ireland church.	Male Narrator	
12	6:19.1 - 6:24.0	Switch on again when you are ready to proceed further.	Female Narrator	
13	6:30.0 - 6:52.2	Let's now walk forward to the left hand row of cells in the West Wing. Leave this tape running and pause by the open door of the second cell on the left. In between the cells you see distinctive apertures in the walls. Gas lights were placed inside them which filtered into two cells and gave light to both at the same time.	Female Narrator	Scene: Cell 2 Left - Thomas Raile
14	6:52.2 - 7:11.2	In this era, we have chosen to depict it's widely believe that criminal evil is a contagious disease. As in dealing with dealing with all	Male Narrator	

		contagions the procedure is to isolate the infected person strictly away from others. In nineteenth century prisons long hours are therefore spent in single cells.		
15	7:11.2 - 7:17.9	Our father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, forgive this day our daily bread	Thomas Raile Character	
16	7:18.0 - 8:02.0	[Thomas Raile continues praying] [This is Thomas Raile convicted of stealing books and other articles. He is serving his time in solitude to contemplate his wrong doing to society.] Raile is nurtured by religious guidance in an attempt to help him see the error of his ways. We see him praying with the protestant chaplain Dr. Nelligan. Rail is a model prisoner and in fact his employers can testify in court as to his good character. Nevertheless, despite this and any moral improvement which the gaol can offer it will not be enough to give him a reference for another job when he is released. He will never work again and will therefore likely be reduced to begging, serious stealing, or emigration.	Male Narrator	
17	8:02.7 - 8:12.1	Move on when you are ready to the next open cell two doors further along on the left. Switch on again when you are there.	Female Narrator	
18	8:18.0 - 8:44.0	Female Narrator: This is Mary McDonald's cell. You can see she's asleep. In prisons from 1817 onwards every prisoner had to have a canvas mattress; considerably healthier than straw. Of course men and women were not incarcerated in the same wing at Cork Gaol. This is a composite		Scene: Mary McDonald

		exhibition showing you samples of prisoners of both sexes held at different times.		
19	8:44.0 - 8:58.7	Sleep well Mary McDonald. It's probably the best nights sleep you'll have had in a long time. At her trial and charges of prostitution and deserting her children the arresting office Constable McCauley stated:	Male Narrator?:	
20	8:58.7 - 9:07.7	The prisoners husband died a few days ago and she's been drunk since. She beat one of the children and I understand she never fed them.	Constable McCauley	
21	9:07.7 - 9:35.8	A widow with children and fifty six previous convictions and still only twenty three. Mary is serving one month and her children have been sent to the workhouse. They may fair better there really except that in Cork workhouses in this year of our Lord 1865 a hundred and fifty six children will die out of a total of eight hundred and sixty eight. Not the most favourable odds when you think about it.	Male Narrator	
22	9:35.8 - 9:40.3	We will move on when you're ready. Switch on again then.	Female Narrator	
23	9:47.0 - 9:58.5	Move along this row of cells. You can actually go into the next open cell and if you're brave enough lock yourself in. Press the red button there if you wish.	Female Narrator	Scene: Empty Cell Try It!
24	9:59.5 - 10:23.0	Continuing on your tour you'll see a gap on the left with a door to the outside. This was never part of the original wing design. In 1927 five years after Cork Gaol ceased to be a prison it became the Cork headquarters for Radío Éireann	Female Narrator:	Scene: Emergency Exit

		Cork 6K. Radío Éireann demolished the cell here to create an entry for large equipment.		
25	10:23.1 - 10:25.5	Female Narrator: Go past it now to the open cell beyond.		Scene: Mary Twohig and baby
26	10:25.6 - 10:41.9	Baby: [(Baby noises)] [It's occupied by Mary Twohig aged sixteen, no occupation. Don't be surprised if you hear some baby noises in this wing for Mary was sentenced to two months imprisonment when in a state of advanced pregnancy.	Male Narrator	Scene: Mary Twohig and baby
27	10:41.9 - 10:48.7	As you can see she is feeding her baby, a boy, who was born in the prison hospital just a month after Mary arrived here.	Female Narrator	Scene: Mary Twohig and baby
28	10:48.7 - 11:02.2	Mary was convicted of stealing a man's cloth cap along with some other clothing and kitchen utensils with a view to pawning them. When she was tried before Cork City Court the mayor said to her:	Male Narrator	Scene: Mary Twohig and baby
29	11:02.2 - 11:12.2	Despite] the seriousness of your crime I shall, due to your advanced condition, only sentence you to two months imprisonment without hard labour.	Mayor	Scene: Mary Twohig and baby
30	11:13.0 - 11:15.3	Which was decent of him.	Male Narrator	Scene: Mary Twohig and baby
31	11:14.8 - 11:25.4	Mary won't serve out her full time but will be released a few days early owing to her baby falling sick. We will never know what then happens to them both.	Female Narrator	Scene: Mary Twohig and baby

32	11:25.7 - 12:33.2	It's hard to escape the conclusion that the worst thing that most of our inmates did was to be born poor.	Male Narrator	Scene: Mary Twohig and baby
33	11:33.6 - 11:41.5	When you're ready walk across the end of the wing to the open cell opposite Mary Twohig's and switch on again there.	Female Narrator	Scene: Mary Twohig and baby
34	11:47.0 - 12:05.5	[(Music)] [Here we see James Byrnes, alias Henry White, leaning against the wall and eating out of a bowl. Henry White considers himself rather above his surroundings. He is here for obtaining goods under false pretences. As Policeman Carson related in court:]	Male Narrator	Scene: Henry White
35	12:05.6 - 12:42.4	[(Music continues)] [On Tuesday evening the prisoner went to the establishment of Mr. E Claybourne of Great Georges Street and represented himself as the son of Captain Smythe who was then staying at the Imperial Hotel. The prisoner making out that he was sharing a room there with his father, after fitting himself with clothes at Mr. Claybourne to the value of five pounds fifteen shillings, the prisoner proceeded to shop at Mr. O'Connor Grand Parade where he obtained using the same story a port mantle valued at one pound seven shillings and sixpence which he also directed to be sent to the Imperial Hotel.]	Policeman Carson:	Scene: Henry White

36	12:43.1 - 13:40.7	<p>[(Music continues)]</p> <p>[Mr Claybourne's manager sent the clothes to to the Imperial at six o'clock as arranged only to be told to return at seven for payment. Of course come seven o'clock our trickster was nowhere to be seen. With some presence of mind the manager rushed off to the railway station and found him just as the 10:10 for Dublin was about to leave. The manager quickly got hold of Constable Carson who arrested Mr. White with the goods.] If anything the story shows the ease with which deliveries were made without prepayment in those trusting times. And there's a delightful image of Mr Claybourne's manager skulking around the station on the lookout for his prey. One hopes he was paid overtime for his trouble. Henry White or James Byrnes is remarked upon in the prison record as not cooperative. He's doing six months hard labour on the treadmill for which more later.</p>	Male Narrator	Scene: Henry White
37	13:42.0 - 14:09.2	<p>Continue along this row of cells until you reach the first of two at the very end, nearly back to where we started in the wing. Go inside the first cell but leave this tape running on the way. As you walk towards these cells you may well be walking in the footsteps of one of Ireland's heroines Countess Markewitsch. She was imprisoned by the government in Cork City Gaol in 1919. You will hear more about her imprisonment later.</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: On the way to Cells 1 and 2 on the Right Countess Markewitsch
38	14:09.2 - 15:56.0	<p>[(Music)]</p> <p>[No prison would be complete without it's wall graffiti but the graffiti you see in this cell</p>	Male Narrator	Scene: On the way to Cells 1 and 2 - Graffiti - Frank OConnor - Conditions

		and in the cell next door are history. They were mostly written by those men and women imprisoned as a result by violent political troubles in Ireland from 1919 to 1921. The troubles as they're known came about when the republican movement of that time opposed British rule in Ireland. Subsequent to the signing of the Treaty in December 1921 a civil war broke out. By early 1922 gaols were crammed with republican prisoners. Cork gaol was overcrowded to bursting point. Conditions became atrocious. One republican inmate a time in the early 1920s was Michael O'Donovan, a native of Cork, and later to find fame as the international renowned writer Frank O'Connor. He later wrote about his internment:]		
39	15:10.1 - 15:25.4	[(Music continues)] [We were crammed in, four to a cell. Three of us slept on the floor with our feet against the door the others stretched out (by) the hot water pipes under the window. The blankets were walkin' with fleas and everywhere was crawlin' with vermin.]	Frank OConnor:	Scene: Graffiti - Frank OConnor - Conditions
40	15:25.4 - 15:56.0	[(Music continues)] [There were no longer facilities for Sunday mass and a suicide net had to be erected across the wing to prevent prisoners plunging from the railing. In its final months the military prison given over largely to political prisoners Cork Gaol became as bad a stinking hole as the prisons it'd been build to replace a hundred years earlier. When the troubles died down in 1923 Cork Gaol was closed altogether never to be used as a	Male Narrator	Scene: Graffiti - Frank OConnor - Conditions

		prison again.]		
41	15:56.0 - 16:02.0	[(Music Continues)..] [Now let's look at the graffiti on these walls as we hear voices from the past.	Female Narrator	Scene: Graffiti - Voices of the Past
42	16:02.0 - 16:08.2	Abandon hope who] enter here out of this there is no redemption.	Voice from the Past 1 (Male)	Scene: Graffiti - Voices of the Past
43	16:09.1 - 16:19.3	(inaudible) transferred to God knows where 20th February Ann O'Donovan(inaudible).	Voice from the Past 2 (Female)	Scene: Graffiti - Voices of the Past
44	16:19.3 - 16:27.5	On my advice take warnin with truth to you I tell where ere you stray keep away from Michael Copley's cell.	Voice from the Past 3 (Male)	Scene: Graffiti - Voices of the Past
45	16:27.7 - 16:35.0	When you finish looking at these two cells switch on again just outside them.	Male Narrator	Scene: Graffiti - Voices of the Past
46	16:35.0 - 17:15.0	When you have seen everything you want to see here on the ground floor proceed up the metal staircase in the centre of this wing to the right of the graffiti cells when you came out of them. It is an authentic recreation of the staircase that was originally here. Oh and by the way can you see a warder way up high looking down in your direction. He is well placed to oversee the whole wing from up there. At any rate turn right at the top of the metal staircase and switch this tape on again when you find yourself face to face with another warder.	Female Narrator	Scene: Go Upstairs
47	17:20.0 - 17:35.0	Best not to argue with this man. Turn away from him and proceed along the landing to further	Male Narrator	Scene: Top of Stairs Nasty Warder

		cells to your left. Stop and switch this tape on again at the next open cell.		
48	17:42.0 - 18:22.5	<p>[(Snoring sound)]</p> <p>In this cell [sleeps Cornelius Kelleher serving one month for drunk and disorderly behaviour. Quite unlike Thomas Raile in every respect Kelleher was arrested after coming out of gaol for serving a previous two month sentence for the same offence. He's considered a notorious bad character but against the wishes of the prosecutor the Mayor of Cork decided for some strange reason to be lenient with him too. Kelleher must pick oakum through daylight hours a common prison labour of this time. You'll learn more about it later. Kelleher will be transferred to an asylum.</p>	Male Narrator:	Scene: Cornelius Kelleher
49	18:22.5 - 18:26.5	Switch on again as you are leaving Kelleher's cell.	Female Narrator	
50	18:33.0 - 18:56.5	<p>You are approaching (inaudible) bundle(d) clothing outside a cell door. Inmates with a previous record of escaping prison are required to leave their clothes outside the cell at night. Escaping clad only in one's underwear is thought not to be very desirable even when having the strongest urge to be free.</p> <p>Now we move on to the next open cell on our left.</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: Escapees Bundle of Clothes
51	18:56.5 - 19:18.2	<p>[(Music)]</p> <p>[Here is poor little Edward O'Brien at the</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: Edward O'Brien and education in the Gaol

		<p>painful business end of one of his twice weekly whippings. Fortunately he doesn't have to endure corporal for more than three weeks but he's to go on to a reformatory for five years. The smallest of our inmates he has the longest sentence except for Mary Kelleher.]</p>		
52	19:18.2 - 20:43.0	<p>Edward is a funny little mixture of the cunning and the naive. At the tender age of nine Edward has seven convictions behind him already. He's currently in gaol because he was caught stealing a couple of brass ball cocks. Edward is clearly marked out for a life of crime unless drastic measures are taken will they work one would like to think so but it's doubtful.]</p>	Male Narrator	Scene: Edward O'Brien and education in the Gaol
53	19:43.2 - 20:01.3	<p>Cork Gaol made earnest attempts to provide basic schooling for children and adults when they were inside. In 1856 a school master and mistress were engaged to teach segregated male and female classes. Attendance was high in the first few years but as was noted in an 1859 official report:</p>	Female Narrator:	Scene: Edward O'Brien and education in the Gaol
54	20:01.3 - 21:07.7	<p>There is no evidence of advancement by those who attended the school over a long period of time.</p>	Official Report Narrator	Scene: Edward O'Brien and education in the Gaol
55	20:07.4 - 20:24.9	<p>By 1869 there were only two pupils in attendance and education was finally abandoned at Cork Gaol in 1873. Religious instruction continued to be given by the Sisters of Mercy for Catholics and</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: Edward O'Brien and education in the Gaol

		by a protestant lady visitor.		
56	20:26.0 - 21:10.0	<p>Continue on to the first floor landing of the circular gallery. As you go across the way to your right you can see the prison doctor, Doctor Beamish, with his medical bag and accompanied by a warder. He is hurrying to attend to a sick convict. Cork Gaol has its own hospital which admits between eighty to a hundred patients each year out of a total prison population of about a thousand. As you can imagine all sorts of diseases are rife amongst them emphysema and smallpox in fact most of the time Dr. Beamish is over-worked. But when he once asked for a rise in his salary the poor man's application was turned down because the authorities it seems placed little value on healing sick prisoners.</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: Dr Beamish
57	21:10.0 - 21:50.0	<p>Continue walking around the left hand side of the circular gallery until you reach the second large window. This window is just past a doorway on its left leading to another wing of cells.</p> <p>[(Music)]</p> <p>The window overlooks the exercise yard. Have you reached it yet? But wait did notice something out of the corner of your eye as you passed by the entry into the old wing. Take a look. Did you look down the passage and see what I'm talking about? Ah well not everyone does.]</p>	Male Narrator	Scene: Circular Gallery and the Ghost
58	21:44.1 - 21:48.9	When you're ready go back to the window and	Female Narrator	

		switch the tape on again.		
59	21:56.0 - 22:44.0	Down in one of the original exercise yards you can see prisoners under the eagle eye of a guard. They walk in single file around a designated circle so that there will be no talking between them. This rule derived from a penal philosophy known generally as the separate system. It was adopted enthusiastically throughout Europe and America during the nineteenth century. Its main idea was that prisoners should behave more or less like Trapest monks under a strict vow of silence twenty four hours a day. Prisons at that time are frequently described as being cloaked in an eerie silence. Unfortunately the only tangible result was that some prisoners were driven mad.	Male Narrator	Scene: The Exercise Yard and Penal Philosophy
60	22:45.0 - 23:06.0	Continuing past the window and before going through the doorway that leads back into the governors house take a last look at the beautiful architectural lines of the west wing. Go through the open doorway which you will find to your immediate left as you go into the passage. Switch your machine on again inside the room there.	Female Narrator	Scene: Exiting the West Wing
61	23:10.5 - 23:50.0	[(Warder inaudible talk and mumblings)] [A cheerful fire and two warders playing cards and smoking indicate that this is a warders rest room for off duty time(s). The profession of warder or turnkey was not held in very high esteem by society in those days. Many of the warders were only a half a step beyond been criminals themselves. Occasionally convicted of dishonesty or drunkenness they might find they	Male Narrator:	Scene: Warders Quarters

		were back among the very inmates they had previously guarded.]		
62	23:40.8 - 23:49.1	<p>[(Warder inaudible talk and mumblings continues)]</p> <p>[You can go through the doorway you see to the right of the window after all you want to see here and switch this tape on again inside the next room.]</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: Warders Quarters
63	23:56.0 - 25:53.0	<p>This room was originally one in which the warders slept at night for in those years warders also lived in; here in the governor's house. But now it is given over to an exhibition of the life of the prison.</p> <p>Pause to look at all of the displays</p>	Female Narrator:	Scene: Exhibition of Life of Prison
64	24:12.7 - 24:31.7	<p>The staple of the prison diet was an unappetizing concoction of thin porridge or gruel made from cheap Indian meal. Doing porridge became an expression for serving time which stayed in the language. Here you can weigh out the meal in the regulation measurements yourself if you like.</p>	Male Narrator	Scene: Exhibition of Life of Prison
65	24:32.0 - 25:45.4	<p>Prison society was totally rule bound for prisoners and staff alike. There was a rule for everything. Here you will see displayed a strict prison daily timetable varying only slightly from year to year.</p>	Female Narrator:	Scene: Exhibition of Life of Prison

66	24:45.8 - 25:28.0	Prison labour at the time we are depicting mid nineteenth century involves the men in mat-making, clog and shoe making, talory, peg-making, tin work, winding, weaving, and oakum picking. Picking oakum was a tedious job. Old rope was unravelled or unpicked so that the separate strands could be used for caulking or stopping up the seams of a boat. Women did spinning, carding or disentangling fibres of wool or hemp before spinning, sewing, and prison clothes making, as well as the ubiquitous oakum picking. Oakum picking died out when oakum became obsolete in boat building.	Male Narrator	Scene: Exhibition of Life of Prison
67	25:28.2 - 25:53.2	Punitive or hard labour for both men and women included cleaning of prison and prison yards and women had also to do the clothes washing. Also displayed in this room are the important dates relating to the prison from opening in 1824 to closing in 1923. Stay with this exhibition until you are ready to move on.	Female Narrator	Scene: Exhibition of Life of Prison
68	25:58.0 - 26:13.0	Now come out of the exhibition room and turn left. Walk on to the doorway and turn right to view a model of Cork City Gaol. Switch the tape on again when you are looking at the model.	Female Narrator	Scene: Guide to the Cork City Gaol model
69	26:18.0 - 29:20.0	[(Music)] [An act of parliament was passed in eighteen hundred and four enabling a new gaol at Cork to be build but many years were to pass before work	Male Narrator	Scene: History of Building and Architecture

		<p>began on the Sundays Well site in 1818. Sandstone for the building was quarried nearby. The design was that of Sir Thomas Deane one of Corks most distinguished architects at a period when Cork architecture was particularly outstanding. You can see his portrait on the wall. He was still in his twenties when he received the commission. Other examples of his work include University College Cork and The Imperial Hotel.]</p>		
70	26:57.1 - 27:10.6	<p>[(Music continues)]</p> <p>[But the main (inaudible) associated with the building of Cork Gaol is that of his mother Elizabeth Deane a redoubtable woman who took over the family building firm on the death of her husband in 1806 and ran it vigorously.]</p>	Female Narrator:	Scene: History of Building and Architecture
71	27:10.6 - 28:21.6	<p>[(Music continues)]</p> <p>[She was a woman of extraordinary energy and one has no doubt whatever that she made her presence felt during the building of Cork City Gaol.]</p>	Anonymous Historical Narrator	Scene: History of Building and Architecture
72	27:21.9 - 28:44.3	<p>[(Music continues)]</p> <p>[The drawings for the gaol were copied by John Hogan, a member of the rising catholic professional middle class who later became one of Ireland's most celebrated neoclassical sculptors. The Deans are credited with discovering John Hogan. He was in his teens at the time and apprenticed to Michael Foote an attorney with</p>	Male Narrator	Scene: History of Building and Architecture

		<p>offices in Patrick Street. Hogan spent every moment he could snatch sketching architectural fancies, copying from prints in shop windows and carving figures from wood. His father was Dean's foreman and when the gaol plans needed urgent copying the firm asked young John to do so. He completed the job to everyone's satisfaction. Dean being a shrewd businessman then had Hogan apprenticed to him at thirteen shillings a week. They later fell out and William (Paulette) Carey became Hogan's patron. Carey raised money to allow Hogan to continue his studies in Rome. Hogan married an Italian, Cornelia Maria (Ignea), a daughter of Colonel (Babanianni) who fought at Waterloo under Napoleon. They had eleven children. The family returned to Dublin in 1847 and John Hogan died in 1858. He's buried at Glasnevin in Dublin.]</p>		
73	28:45.0 - 29:18.1	<p>[(Music continues)]</p> <p>[In this model you can see that the beautifully proportioned five circular towers at the end of each of the original wings are what chiefly give the prison its castle like appearance. The romantic outline offsets the surface of the wings themselves. The governor's house which forms the central block is a fine example of Georgian Gothic style. It is double fronted and looks out onto the north and south courtyards. The prison gate house was build at the same time. Switch on again when you've viewed both the model and the panel.]</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: History of Building and Architecture
74	29:25.0 - 29:36.0	<p>Now turn right round from the model and take the steps you see in front of you down to the ground</p>	Female narrator	Scene: To Ground Floor

		<p>floor. Switch on again when you're at the bottom of the stairs.</p>		
75	29:43.0 - 30:08.0	<p>You should now be at the bottom of the stairs. If you turn around to your left and walk alongside the staircase for a few steps you'll come across a narrow little opening under the stairs. It leads down into a dank subterranean passage but it's not I'm afraid open to visitors. It's said that this was a secret passage for the governor's use only but it tunnels underground to past the gate house.</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: Governor's Tunnel
76	30:14.0 - 30:51.0	<p>Your time machine has now brought you to the end of this section of your tour. Please hand back your machine at the desk here before walking through the gaol shop towards the East Wing with its exhibition on punishment including graphics dealing with hangings which took place at Cork City Gaol. Did you know you passed under a gallows when you first came through the Gate House front entrance. It's true. Before hangings were removed inside the gaol walls away from the public gaze those sentenced to death were hanged from high above the gate house door.</p>	Male Narrator	Scene: Epilogue and Exhibition on Punishment
77	30:51.0 - 31:13.0	<p>[(Music)]</p> <p>[Sorry to end our sound tour on such a grim note. However you still have much to experience at Cork City Gaol and indeed you may wish to take time at this point to browse through the shop](</p>	Female Narrator	Scene: Goodbye

		tape cuts off)		
78	31:03.4 - 31:12.3	[(Music continues)] [Goodbye]	Male Narrator	Scene: Goodbye

Appendix 4 – Practitioner Survey

Narrative in Creative Arts Practice

Survey of Narrative in Creative Arts Practice

This survey is being conducted as part of a study about how narrative is understood and used by creative arts practitioners. The study is part of a doctoral research programme at University of Plymouth, UK and is supported by Cork Institute of Technology . All information collected as part of the study is confidential and will not be reused for any other purpose outside of the explicit goals of the programme. The broader research aim is to develop a narrative framework for creative practice.

There is a total of 13 items that you can answer below and which should take no longer than 5 to 10 minutes to complete. If you have any comments to offer on the survey design or on any of the questions contained in it item 13 provides the option for you to leave a note.

If you have any queries in relation to the survey please do not hesitate to email Paul Green at: <paul.green@plymouth.ac.uk> or <paul.green@cit.ie>

Thank you in advance for your time, it is much appreciated.

- * 1. Please select the term that most accurately describes your current or prospective professional role.
(choose more than one if necessary)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artist | <input type="checkbox"/> Curator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts-person | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Worker or Therapist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educator | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designer | <input type="checkbox"/> Researcher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

- * 2. If you are currently enrolled in formal education please select the level of the course from the list below. If you have completed your formal education please select the highest level you have achieved to date. (In either case this should be relevant to your creative practice.)

- ☐ none/self-taught
- ☐ further education certificate or diploma
- ☐ undergraduate/university degree
- ☐ postgraduate certificate
- ☐ masters degree
- ☐ doctoral degree

* 3. Select from the following those that best describe where, or through which channel, your audience might experience your work.

(choose more than one if necessary)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> art gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> printed publication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> theatre | <input type="checkbox"/> broadcast media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cinema | <input type="checkbox"/> online publication |
| <input type="checkbox"/> museum | <input type="checkbox"/> public space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 4. Do you have a preferred medium? (choose more than one if necessary)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> painting/drawing | <input type="checkbox"/> video/film/animation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> illustration/photography | <input type="checkbox"/> mixed/combined/found media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> graphic/computer-generated | <input type="checkbox"/> multimedia/electronic/interactive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> casting/modelling/sculpture | <input type="checkbox"/> sonic/audio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> performance/happenings | <input type="checkbox"/> eclectic (no preferred medium) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> verbal/text/language | <input type="checkbox"/> site-specific/installation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ceramics/glass/textiles | <input type="checkbox"/> dance/music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

5. Would you consider narrative to be a feature of your work

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ On occasions

* 6. Is 'Narratology' a term you might reference to describe or explain any aspect of your practice?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

* 7. Are there particular theories of narrative you would regard as relevant to your work or practice?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

* 8. Could you name a theorist (e.g. curator, philosopher, historian, critic, or author) whose addresses narrative and who has influenced your practice in some way?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you answered 'Yes' could you please enter the name in the field below:

* 9. Could you name one practitioner whose work you would describe as narrative?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you answered 'Yes' could you please enter the name in the field below:

10. How closely do the following statements match your understanding of what of narrative is?

	Not at all	Somewhat	Unsure	Very well	Perfectly
'Narrative' means the same thing as 'story'.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I must understand the point of a narrative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A narrative can be either factual or fictional.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A narrative must be believable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A narrative must be engaging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A narrative cannot exist without characters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Narratives must contain actions that are responses to other events in the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 11. How do the following statements concur with your understanding of narrative media?

	Strongly agree	agree	unsure	disagree	Strongly disagree
Narrative may be found in media like novels or films but not paintings or photographs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A narrative cannot be communicated without verbal language - written or spoken.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A silent film or animation cannot communicate a narrative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A single image cannot communicate a narrative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All narrative media must be capable of ordering a sequence of events in time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A series of still images can communicate a story.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An abstract painting cannot communicate a narrative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To communicate narrative a still image must depict something recognisable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* 12. How do the following statements concur with the place narrative has in your practice?

	Strongly agree	agree	unsure	disagree	Strongly disagree
I sometimes try to present a narrative through my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People will understand the narrative I try to present through my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It doesn't matter if people don't get the narrative I try to present through my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Narrative is part of my creative process, or thinking, but not my final artwork.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is no narrative in either my process, thinking or artwork.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not intend my artwork to carry a narrative but I understand how people might construct one.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The story I see in my work is not one my audience will necessarily understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People who see my work must also be aware of my process in order to understand the narrative.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The narrative in my work is autobiographic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My work provides a narrative which is about how I experience the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

Appendix 6 – Paper Abstracts

Event: Irish Human Computer Interaction Conference 2010, Dublin City
University, Dublin, Ireland

The Artwork Reaches Out Considerations towards a framework for social
aesthetics in new media art

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iDAT

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Abstract

Recent developments in art practice demonstrate an increased usage of digital technologies in the creation and presentation of art that provides for an extension of the audience's agency in the experience of the work. The majority of literature within the context of art practice that focuses on aesthetics has been dominated by a concern with visual content at the expense of other sensory modalities, and cognitive or social domains. This paper supports the recent renewed interest in aesthetics with particular reference to contemporary interactive or digital artefacts. It addresses specifically the social attributes prevalent in such artefacts whose content shifts through interaction with humans or objects and presents some outline considerations for what might be called a 'social aesthetic'.

General Terms

Design, Human Factors, Theory.

Event: CERC International Conference, University of Applied Science,
Darmstadt, Germany, 2012

Cognitive prototypes and narrative thinking

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Abstract

The emergence of interest in ‘experience’ over ‘use’ in interaction design has recast the role of the user from a ‘cog in rational machine’ to one who experiences technology as part of a living environment (McCarthy and Wright, 2004). This shift in emphasis is part of a longer discourse in HCI which charts a trajectory from expert user to social actor (Grudin, 1990; Bannon, 1991). As part of this shift from *usability* towards *experience* there has been an increasingly visible presence of an artistic attitude in a field of HCI. While the broader context of this research is concerned with the design of experience around responsive artefacts this paper concentrates on how ‘narrative thinking’ operates within the context of open-ended visual content. It promotes the decoupling of narrative from material artefacts and emphasises reader centric perspectives which hinge on personal experience and meaning making. The paper represents one step in an argument for establishing a narrative framework for creative practice with a particular interest in responsive artefacts.

Keywords

Narrative, visual content, cognitive narratology, theory.

Event: CERC International Conference, Blackrock Castle, Cork Institute of Technology, Cork, Ireland, 2013

Facilitating the ‘distributed museum’ through digitally augmented artefacts

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Abstract

Through creative practice this research aims to see how digitally augmented museum artefacts can support a relationship between people and a museum over an extended period of time. Typically, museum visits involve people taking short periods out of their everyday activities to immerse themselves in the history and heritage of the museum. Allowing people to engage with the museum over a longer duration of time involves us exploring the digital footprint of the museum and how this relates to physical artefacts. We adopt the notion of the ‘distributed museum’ to support the research which is conducted with the support of Cork Butter Museum (CBM). The heritage represented by Cork Butter Museum is linked to the surrounding environment in the form of roads, places, and artefacts which people may not necessarily see in a historical context. We therefore regard CBM as a particularly useful environment for exploring the notion of the distributed museum where an on-going engagement with heritage can be examined.

Keywords

Interaction, new media technologies, distributed heritage, physical computing.

Event: CERC International Conference, Blackrock Castle, Cork Institute of Technology, Cork, Ireland, 2013

Designing for Play

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Abstract

This paper discusses the on-going research into using a play centred design approach for informal learning environments; the research is situated at Cork City Gaol, a visitor centre in Cork City. The paper introduces the concepts behind play-centred design taking into account three crucial areas; informal learning, play and games. We discuss the design process that is being undertaken at the gaol, focusing on current observation and dynamics of the museum. Finally, we reflect on the research so far and make recommendations for the future. This research locates itself within a context whereby the museum is perceived as an educational playground which takes advantage of new media technologies to extend a deeper interactive relationship between visitors and museum.

Keywords

Museum, Play, HCI

Event: Research Day, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland, 2015

Negotiating principles for exhibition design

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Abstract

The presentation/paper will introduce a set of principles used to negotiate the fit-out for a new heritage and exhibition centre, Nano Nagle Place, currently under development in Cork City centre.

The principles were built on knowledge gleaned through ongoing research work at a number of heritage centres in Munster and through a wider walk-through survey of museums and visitor spaces across Ireland and the UK. Their purpose is to assist communication between the company commissioning the fit-out of the museum and the exhibition designer undertaking the work. The walk-through observations were conducted at a range of sites across Ireland in Cork Limerick, Clare, Dublin, Dundalk, and Belfast; and in total there were eight locations surveyed in the greater London area. The sample of spaces included small- and large-scale public museums as well as open air environments. The work demonstrates some concerns about problems that emerge in the general experience of public exhibition spaces as well as issues that are tied to the specific characteristics of Nano Nagle Place. Using examples, from the survey and project work, it is proposed that the principles will be summarised as they relate to: the use of chronology and narrative as structures for the organisation of exhibits; conflicts between technology and experience; issues of authenticity and sense of place; and considerations of community in curatorial practice. This study is part of a PhD in Art and Media at University of Plymouth, UK, which is exploring the application of narrative theory to contemporary artistic practice.

Keywords

Museum design, design principles, narrative

Event: CERC International Conference, Blackrock Castle, Cork Institute of Technology, Cork, Ireland, 2016

Designing narrative artefacts - the lives of women in eighteenth century
Cork

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Abstract

This paper introduces the initial phase of a research project which is aligned with the development of a new heritage centre in Cork City entitled Nano Nagle Place. The centre is dedicated to communicating the life story and legacy of Honora (Nano) Nagle. Part of this story involves presenting a portrait of the city of Cork against a backdrop of political and social life in eighteenth century Ireland. The topical content of the research is embedded within this history and focusses specifically on the impact of the social and political environment at the time on the lives of women. Academically, the project investigates the way in which narrative, when integrated with visual design and material culture, can support the goal of producing engaging and memorable designs for visitors or remote users of the heritage site. The project therefore contributes to the emerging study of narrative in art and design (Anderson, 2011, Hadjilouca et al., 2013) by accounting for the way in which visual media can be employed to allow audiences participating in the recovery of stories from material objects. This approach to narrative in design is typically influenced by a constructivist orientation in psychology (Bruner, 1986, 1990) and underlies recent studies that contribute transmedial narrative (Herman, 2004), cognitive narratology (Ryan, 1991, Herman, 2003, 2010, Fludernik, 2003), and to some extent multimodal narrative (Page, 2010).

Keywords

Narrative, design, material culture, heritage

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